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The United Church of Canada

OUR COMMON FAITH

By

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With a Brief History of the Church Union
Movement in Canada

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THE RYERSON PRESS

TORONTO

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THE UNITED CHURCH
PUBLISHING HOUSE
1928

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FOREWORD

THIS exposition of the doctrines of the Basis of Union will be welcomed warmly by a wide circle of readers. The question is often asked: is it possible for evangelical Christians to unite in a statement of belief which will contain in full the doctrines of grace. This book is the answer.

Its author is admirably qualified to present to the entire Christian church this re-statement of the foundations of her faith. Dr. T. B. Kilpatrick is one of Scotland's best gifts to Canada. He came to Manitoba College, Winnipeg, in 1899, as Professor of Systematic Theology, and in 1905 was transferred to the same chair in Knox College, Toronto. Already a ripe scholar and a powerful preacher, his experience has deepened with the years. His passion is the saving grace of God in Christ. He has aimed to cultivate in the Christian ministry sound learning, fired with a love for the souls of men. As a professor he has trained and inspired hundreds of our ministers who are to-day shaping the church in this new land and directing her policy. As a preacher he has moved our congregations into the deeper experiences and higher attainments of the Christian life. It has then been his privilege to open the sources of the church's spiritual vitality and energy in the formative period of her history in this young nation.

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Dr. Kilpatrick has always been an enthusiastic advocate of Church Union. At the same time he has recognized the fact that no satisfactory basis of Union could ever be reached by compromise on the vital truths of Christianity. The triumph of the Basis of Union in forming which he had so large a part, is that in it the central truths of the Gospel are contained in their fulness. In this exposition the author brings out their religious rather than their theological values. In so far as it is theology it is experimental, rising out of the experience of God in Christ. Experts in technical theology will notice at once that a great deal which enters into the older credal statements is missing here. There is, for example, no technical discussion of pre-destination or of baptism or of the differences in respect to Holy Orders between Episcopal and non-Episcopal churches. The whole aim of the book is to make a synthesis of experimental truth. These doctrines are accepted by all evangelical Christians. There is nothing here to alienate believers from one another or to perpetuate divisions. The statement is a uniting document, and is designed to bring together those whose similarities and even identities are far more important than their differences. The book will therefore be peculiarly helpful to the pastor and preacher. It will be an inestimable boon to the church if, wherever possible, study groups are formed and series of sermons preached on the doctrines of the Basis of Union. This book will

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equip admirably our church's leaders for this service.

The brief historical sketch of the Union Movement in Canada which forms the first part of the book is from the pen of Mr. Kenneth H. Cousland, Lecturer in History in Emmanuel College. Mr. Cousland has made a special study of the subject, has had access to the historical records and documentary evidence, and has been at pains to write a clear, frank statement. He has done his work with rare skill and in excellent style.

[Signed]

GEO. C. PIDGEON.

PART ONE

A Brief History of the Church Union Movement in Canada

ORIGIN AND MOTIVES

There are two main factors underlying the Church Union Movement in Canada. In the first place it is deeply spiritual. The men who led the movement that brought about the Union of the Presbyterian and Methodist and Congregational Churches believed that the will of God for His Church is a unity of spirit expressed outwardly in so striking a fashion that it will convince the world of the truth of Christianity. Men of Catholic spirit were distressed at the torn body of Christ. The divisions within the Church were a sore reproach to them. Many regarded them as a source of weakness in that the forces of the Church, which should have presented a united front in the conflict of winning the world for Christ, were sadly divided. They did not belittle the advantages that had come through divisions in the past when denominations arose to witness to some particular aspect of the truth, but they began to realize more and more fully that the things on which the denominations differed were of small account in comparison with those upon which they agreed. They could not believe that Divine

truth is divided into separate compartments of which each denomination is the guardian of one particular part. Christ is one and indivisible and all agreed that believers everywhere had a real although unseen spiritual unity with one another in Him. But the conviction was growing that the Christian ideal was to make this unseen spiritual fellowship into a visible unity. There were stirrings beneath the surface of denominationalism which showed that spiritual currents were flowing towards the realization of a more complete fulfilment of our Lord's Prayer, "That they all may be one: as Thou Father art in Me and I am in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." Questions were being asked as to the deepest implications of that prayer. What did it lead to? Did the existence of denominations really fulfil its meaning? It was increasingly felt that as long as divisions persisted the prayer could not be adequately fulfilled and that visible as well as spiritual unity was the most complete fulfilment.

This was the vision of some of the religious leaders of earlier days. The Rev. Enoch Barker was Chairman of the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, which met at Toronto in 1874, and in his Chairman's address he advocated organic union of certain branches of the Christian Church which had much in common. In the course of his speech he said: "Some argue that spiritual union such as we already have to some extent, is the only

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kind to be sought, as well as the only kind practicable. It is indeed pleasant to note greater unity even among the various denominations of true Christians than is to be found in some systems of uniformity. But were it not that Christian love is mighty, the existing divisions, with the rivalry and the contractedness that they foster, would be too heavy a strain upon it. It is useless attempting to persuade people that real union already exists when denominations so jostle one another. . . . Would it have been felt that the Church at Jerusalem was united, had it been divided into so many branches as the Christian Church is now? Would not such divisions have incurred Apostolic rebuke? . . . In order, then, to remove occasion of discord, to cultivate broad views and large charity, to arm the Church with its divinely given power, to economize the labor and funds of the Church for missions, to convince the world that Christ and His religion are from above, and especially to please Him whose heart yearned for the oneness of His people—these glorious objects would urge us to seek so close a union as possible among all Christ's people and to make any sacrifices, except those of principle, in order to accomplish it."

In 1890 the following address, signed by Dr. A. Carman and S. F. Huestis, was adopted as an expression of the view of the Conference of the Methodist Church (Canada): "With all sincere Christians we desire to see a closer union among those who labor for the universal prevalence of

Christianity. We feel the urgency of the command 'Preach the Gospel to every creature,' and we are painfully satisfied of the sad fact that the dissensions and divisions of Christendom tend rather to emphasize denominational interests at home, than to spread a knowledge of Christ among the teeming millions abroad. . . . We rejoice in the manifest signs of the times, in the willingness exhibited by so many to merge their minor differences for the sake of the common good: to remove the emphasis from ideas that for generations have been almost rallying points, if by such concessions more united action could be secured."

Principal G. M. Grant, in preaching on 1 Corinthians 1: 13, "Is Christ divided?" put the case strongly.* "This is St. Paul's terribly emphatic summary of what the existence of parties or denominations in the Church meant. The words are enough to fill with horror the mind of anyone who loves the Saviour. . . . But in opposition to Paul who says, 'I exhort you to call yourselves by one common name; modern denominationalism offers a regular argument in its defence. Its plea is substantially this: Men must be faithful to the truth that has been revealed to them, and to allow differences of opinion in the same church is to be unfaithful to the truth. Well, Paul evidently thought nothing of this argument. The differences between believers in his day were more formidable than any that separate our Canadian Churches,

*Queen's University Sunday afternoon addresses 1893.

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yet he concluded that the Church should not be divided." Again, in lecturing to his Divinity Class in Queen's University, Principal Grant used these words: "Gentlemen, you and I are not responsible for the existing divisions of Christendom, but I beg you not to accept ordination until you are convinced that should you by word or deed perpetuate these divisions by one unnecessary day you will have been unworthy of your ordination." No less noteworthy were the words of Principal Caven, who was revered and beloved by all for his deeply spiritual nature, and whose utterances were listened to with sincere respect because of his insight, tact and practical wisdom. At the Conference on Christian Unity held in Toronto in April, 1889, Principal Caven expressed his convictions in these words: "While in the wise and merciful providence of God divisions in the Christian Church have often been overruled for good, yet, in themselves, these divisions are to be lamented as productive of many and sore evils. The ideal of the unity of believers set forth in the Scriptures—especially in our Lord's Intercessory Prayer—while chiefly spiritual in its nature, can be fully represented in an undivided state of the visible Church, in which perfect fellowship shall be maintained throughout the entire body of Christ; and it is the duty of the Church, and of all its members continually, to aspire towards, and labor for, the completeness of this manifested union in the Lord." On another occasion he pointed out the higher purposes that secession and disruption had served

in preserving the life of the Church in times of crisis, even as amputation of a limb sometimes saves a life. But denominationalism is not the ideal condition of the Church. If things are right with the Church there should be no divisions or schisms. Many excellent persons do indeed hold that denominationalism is better than organic union and that spiritual unity is all that is needed either for efficient service or in order to fulfil Christ's prayer, "That they all may be one." "For myself," said the venerable Principal, "I do not so think. Union, real organic union, such as we desire, would not only enable us to deal more economically with our resources but what is more important, would represent in a far truer and more perfect way the body of Christ. Spiritual union, if complete and unhampered, must seek adequately to represent itself in outward organic unity." Here is the true basis of the Church Union Movement.

CONCERTED ACTION NECESSARY

The particular needs of a rapidly-growing country provided the other great factor which led many to believe that organic union of the Churches was necessary in Canada. Perhaps the main incentive was the condition of Western Canada where the population was scattered and where the difficulties of maintaining denominationalism were very great. The building of the Trans-Continental Railways prepared the way for settlers, and in the footsteps of the early adventurer there came an ever-increasing

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stream of immigration. The Churches strove to keep abreast with this influx. Principal King, Principal Sparling, Dr. James Woodsworth and the heroic James Robertson strove to keep the missionary moving forward with each new settlement. From the beginning there had been denominational rivalry, but it was becoming obvious that if the denominations remained apart the task ahead of them was well-nigh impossible. There was danger that the dis-united churches would not be able to keep pace with the needs of the rapidly-growing population. The problem of the foreign elements alone was most serious. Their peoples were for the most part good settlers on the land, but they lived in segregated areas, isolated from the life of Canada as a whole. There were even some English-speaking areas settled for years in which the people had never had the services of a resident minister. There were Protestant children growing up isolated from the influence of Christianity—a condition not confined to the West. The overwhelming urgency of meeting such needs as these showed the folly of divisions and competition. The important thing was to gain Canada, its men and its life, for the Kingdom of Christ.

What solution could there be? To divide the areas into districts for which one or other of the denominations accepted responsibility, would be an arbitrary proceeding. The formation of Community Churches was suggested and Federation was mooted. Different plans were suggested and tried

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and some good results followed. A degree of co-operation was attained, but the attempts showed the almost insuperable difficulties of any such plans. Before long men's minds turned seriously to the plan of organic union as ultimately the only satisfactory solution. Unions within the different denominations were widening men's outlook to a vision of wider and yet wider unions, not only for the sake of expediency but chiefly to express the inward and spiritual necessity.

NATIONAL UNITY AND CHURCH UNION

The whole history of the political and religious life of Canada is a story of the knitting together of separate units to form a larger and more complete whole. National union and Church union have gone side by side. The Canadian spirit has been moving steadily towards wider unity. Politically that spirit found expression in Confederation, religiously it was manifested by movements among the churches towards unity. The Methodist Churches in the Dominion had made a definite move towards nation-wide unity by a union in 1874, and eight years after Confederation the dream of a united and Dominion-wide Presbyterian Church for all Canada was realized. These unions not only broadened and deepened the spiritual life of the churches, but had a definite effect upon national life, by bringing about a better understanding between the people of the different provinces and the

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realization of a common interest. Canada was a nation in the making and only the ties of religious fellowship could lay the foundations in righteousness.

Thus it may fairly be claimed that union is a characteristic of Canadian life. From the early days of British occupation, nearly all the great religious bodies in Canada have taken shape as the result of a series of Unions which have occurred with great regularity. Christians of varying creeds were brought together by the spiritual needs of a scattered population and by the intermingling of members of different denominations in each small settlement. In many cases the slender resources of pioneer communities admitted of the support of only one minister or meeting-house. Often they found that the grounds of difference existing between them in the country of their origin did not exist in this new land. It was but a step to establish a principle that differences between churches in the Old Land should not stand in the way of unity in the new. It became increasingly clear that it was absurd to reproduce the sectarian divisions which were historically justifiable in the land of their origin but which had no *raison d'être* in the new. The history of the development of the church in Canada shows that the principle became extended for men felt that when the need for which a particular sect had arisen no longer existed, there was no further barrier to wider union.

HISTORY AND PROCEDURE

The first non-Episcopal Church in what is now the Dominion of Canada was the "Protestant Dissenters' Chapel," established in Halifax in 1749. Formed as a union church partly of Congregationalists and partly of Scotch Presbyterians, it was organized at a meeting held in an Anglican Church and for many years got its ministers from both Congregational and Presbyterian Churches. It is also interesting to note that the first Presbytery meeting was held at the Protestant Dissenters' Church at Halifax in 1770 to conduct the earliest Presbyterian Ordination in what is now Canada. For this purpose a Presbytery was constituted consisting of two Presbyterian and two Congregational ministers. It was a union but for a moment and for the particular object of conducting the Ordination, but it is significant of the broadening influences of the new conditions. The first organic union took place in 1817 and following this there was a succession of unions among the Presbyterian bodies, until in 1875 all were united as The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The union negotiations had not been easy, and nearly every step had been vigorously opposed at some point. But within eight years of the birth of the Dominion there was constituted a Dominion-wide Presbyterian Church free to work out its destiny in the new land; free from all ties with the mother churches, yet bound to them as truly as the Dominion is bound to the

mother land. This was the first complete Union and was the result of a long series of Unions, nine in all, in addition to seven absorptions of formerly independent bodies.

The same process was going on in the Methodist Church and there is an imposing array of Unions among its groups to give further proof that we have here a national process. Altogether there were eight unions in the Methodist Church and these unions included some sixteen bodies. Some of these had been separated simply through geographical conditions, others because they sprang from different parents and yet others arose from internal dissensions. The tendency in the succession of union movements was to widen the church on the scale of the growth of the provinces. With the formation of the Dominion, Methodist Unions began to be of a national scale until in 1884 all their bodies were united as The Methodist Church.

The Congregational Churches of Canada also exhibited the same tendency, for their congregations organized The Congregational Union of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in 1846, and The Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec in 1854. These two bodies united as The Congregational Union of Canada in 1906. The nature of these unions was somewhat different from those of the other churches, for it was not a matter of uniting different communions, but of consolidating the church throughout the Dominion.

Within the Anglican Church the trend towards

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unity was manifest in the formation of the Anglican Synod in 1890.

Clearly union is rooted in the past history of Canada. Equally clearly the churches which united in the past looked for larger unions in the future. The contentious features of the different bodies created long before by particular circumstances were bound to be out of place in the virile Protestantism demanded in a young country such as Canada. The hope of a general union of Canadian Protestant Churches had been expressed by responsible leaders of the Church from early time. At the time of the Nova Scotia Union of 1860, Professor Ross of Truro said: "We accept what has been done most thankfully as a token of further union. The thought is transporting. When the spirit of union begins to move, who will venture to set bounds to its influence?" At the consummation of the Presbyterian Union of 1861, Dr. Ormiston closed an address at Montreal in these words: "May God grant that not in this church alone, but in all churches the spirit of union may prevail . . . till it covers the whole land."

An article in the *Presbyterian Witness* (Halifax), of 18th June, 1874, is strikingly suggestive of the movement towards union. "If all Presbyterians can become one church and all Methodists another in this generation" it asks, "why should not a future day make these two bodies one? It would be no stranger than the facts which our eyes now behold." It goes on to point out the absurdity of people who

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agree otherwise being kept apart by dead issues. Equally suggestive is the Resolution carried by the Anglican Synod of Quebec in the same year (1874) giving "expression to its earnest desire that under the guidance and blessing of the Holy Spirit, some suitable measure may be adopted, so that representatives of the various religious bodies, especially those among the Protestant Christians, may meet and consult how they may best advance the blessed cause of union in heart and in church membership." Words were carried into action by the appointment of a committee to consider the best means for bringing the various branches of the church together again in one body. In referring to this resolution of the Episcopal Synod of Quebec, the *Presbyterian Witness* remarks: "The Congregational Union and this (Anglican) Synod, representing communities very far apart in their outward form have both of them given utterance to views on the subject of Church Union which have surpassed, probably, anything that has been mooted in these (Presbyterian) Churches which during this year have brought actual Unions to the verge of consummation.

In that same year Principal Grant gave an address, "The Church of Canada—Can Such a Thing be?" His forecast seemed Utopian, but within twenty years it was giving promise of ultimate fulfilment, and he was able to say: "Union is in the air and we all breathe the air." Ever since 1875 The Presbyterian Church in Canada had foreseen

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a greater union. When the church was first brought into being the inaugural address of the Moderator, Dr. John Cook, dealt with this subject in these prophetic words: "I may perhaps take the opportunity of saying what I have said elsewhere, that far larger union is, I trust, in store for the Churches of Christ even in Canada than that which we effect this day. That is but a small step to the union which our Lord's Intercessory Prayer seems to contemplate. . . . It behooves us in this matter of union as in regard to all Christian duty, to be looking and pressing forward to greater attainments. . . . We justly revere the men of Glasgow in 1638 and of Westminster in 1649, but they were not inspired prophets more than we; and no larger union will be accomplished if we hold in regard to them . . . that every part and parcel of what they established is as little to be touched or altered as the words of the Evangelists or Apostles. . . . There has been a strong tendency everywhere to expose and protest against the errors and deficiencies of other bodies. There would, I apprehend, be greater profit in looking for and marking the good that is in them. I am deliberately of the opinion that there is not one Christian organization from the Church of Rome down to the last-formed gathering of the Plymouth Brethren from whence some good lesson might not be learned, and which could not be added for its advantage to our common Presbyterianism. . . . It is in the prevalence of such reasonable humility

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in respect to themselves and charitable constructions in regard to others in the Protestant Churches of the Dominion, that I look for a union in the future, before which the present—blessed and auspicious though we justly count it—shall appear slight and insignificant. May God hasten it in His time!"

Discussions among the Congregationalists in 1887 brought out the fact that the distinctive principle of Congregational individualism was being more and more adopted and acted upon by other religious bodies, while on the other hand the necessity for general co-operation and mutual assistance among churches was being acknowledged even by the most ardent Independents and was being carried out more fully everywhere. In such circumstances it was frequently being asked if a union between the Congregational Churches and some of the other religious bodies could not be effected on terms which would be honorable and acceptable to all concerned. Some were quite prepared for such a union but many thought the difficulties were insuperable. The *Toronto Globe* of 24th March, 1887, expresses the opinion, "That the more the question is stirred the more the desire for its realization will grow in strength and the more its feasibility and its varied advantages will become apparent and attractive." Correspondence in the columns of the *Globe* at this time showed that interest was being taken in the subject.

A little later in the same year a book, entitled "Organic Union of the Christian Churches," was

issued by the Very Reverend Dean Carmichael, of Montreal, in which the author set forth many potent arguments in favor of Protestant union, emphasizing the fact that Canada was in an admirable position to test such union. He showed that when the authoritative documents of the churches were examined there was a wonderful amount of agreement on all the great leading fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.

Undoubtedly it was an age of union and communion. Christians of all denominations were drawing more closely to one another, and the hope was freely expressed that the drawing together of the various bodies was but part of a wider, deeper and more magnificent movement which would embrace all believers.

WIDER UNION

The first steps toward wider union were taken in 1885 when the Provincial Synod of Canada (Anglican) appointed a committee on Christian Union and invited conference with the Methodists and Presbyterians. Next year the Methodist General Conference appointed a committee to confer and the Presbyterian General Assembly appointed a similar committee in 1888. A conference on Christian Unity was held in the following year between the committees appointed by the general organizations of their churches, and as a result the idea of organic unity gained a great hold upon the minds of many. This was the period of the emergence of the Lambeth

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Quadrilateral, and when details of the historic Episcopate came to be discussed it was found that no real progress towards union could be made. Opinion was now becoming clarified, and it was seen that the next great union in Canada was likely to be among the non-Episcopal Churches. In 1892, the Presbyterians took the initiative when a deputation from the Assembly, meeting at Montreal, addressed the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, and "in holding out the right hand of fellowship, practically invited closer corporate Union. In response to this suggestion ten Congregational ministers in the following January, though not claiming to represent their brethren, presented through three of their number, to the Presbytery of Toronto, a request for a conference with representatives of the Presbytery on the subject of Union of the two churches. "You have the privilege of overture, of initiation," they said, "and if we must remain apart it is well we should know why." After holding two conferences by joint committees, the Presbytery memorialized the Assembly in 1893, asking for the appointment of a committee on union with the Congregational Churches. The Assembly, however, took a wider view and appointed a committee on the general subject of union, with instructions to hold itself ready to confer with any similar body from other churches, should the way be opened up for such conferences. Evidently the Assembly was looking towards the Methodist Church. Moreover, dis-

cussions in the press and elsewhere at this time show that a number of the leaders were beginning to feel that there was no vital reason why the Presbyterians and Methodists could not come together. In the course of an address upon "Points of Agreement," Principal Caven said, "In any case the amount of doctrinal harmony is so great as to afford large grounds for hope that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the matters respecting which we differ, and which are now deemed sufficient reason for separation, may, on all hands, come to be so well understood, as to remove every obstacle to Union." The Presbyterian Assembly showed their interest in organic union by appointing Principal Caven Convener of a large and thoroughly representative committee in 1893, giving it instructions to hold itself ready. This committee was reappointed year by year until and including 1901, with Principal Caven as Chairman throughout the period.

The idea of Federation was also brought forward at this time and the proposal of the Methodist General Conference of 1894 to establish a Federal Court composed of representatives of the negotiating churches was approved by Assembly. Steps towards co-operation in Home Missions were taken but no satisfactory scheme of Federation could be agreed upon. Principal Patrick, of Manitoba College, examined the situation and found "that no adequate or final settlement could be reached in this way" (that is, by co-operation) "and that it would indeed be an easier task from the practical stand-

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point to unite the Churches . . .” The attempt at Federation having proved unsuccessful, the proposal was dropped, but efforts were made to prevent over-lapping of work and interdenominational rivalry. The foundation of the Canadian Society of Christian Union by members of different communions expressed the growth of sentiment in favor of Union at this time.

METHODIST ACTION

The year 1902 marked a distinct advance. The *Presbyterian Witness* (Halifax, June 21, 1902), in reporting the visit of delegations from other churches to Assembly, said, “Our Congregational brethren went farthest, farther indeed than any delegation I am able to recall. They pronounced distinctly in favor of union on terms which our church would not have the slightest hesitation in accepting.” The Moderator, Dr. Bryce, reciprocated the sentiments of union. Later in the year a delegation from the Presbyterian Assembly visited the Methodist General Conference where Principal Patrick, while disclaiming any title to speak for the Presbyterian Church, spoke strongly on behalf of union, outlining proposals already discussed by unofficial groups. His words gave expression to sentiments that were already widespread in both churches. Without any reference to his speech, the Conference two days later adopted with enthusiasm a Resolution definitely proposing the organic union of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches. This

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important Resolution was referred by the next Presbyterian General Assembly to a committee which met with similar committees of the Methodist and Congregational Churches. The meeting was distinguished by a great speech on behalf of union by Principal Caven, who showed that the working creed and fundamental positions of the negotiating churches were almost identical, and pointed out the growth of the Presbyterian system in the Methodist Church. He pled for the earnest and practical facing of the problems of Church union, not merely for economy in men and money, but especially because he believed it to be the desire of the Lord and the burden of this prayer on the eve of His Passion. "Brethren," he urged, "we ought to do it." The committees found that "organic union is both desirable and practicable" and commended "the whole subject to the sympathy and favorable consideration of the Chief Assemblies of the Churches concerned for such further action as they may deem wise and expedient. This finding was reported to the General Assembly and to the Congregational Unions. Each appointed a committee to confer on the subject of Church Union with the committee previously appointed by the Methodist Church. Principal Caven was Convener of a strong Presbyterian Committee but was removed by death shortly before the meeting of the joint committee. His place was taken by Dr. Warden. The Convener of the Methodist Committee was Dr. Albert

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Carman, and of the Congregational, Rev. Hugh Pedley.

THE JOINT UNION COMMITTEE

The first meeting of the new Joint Committee on Union was held in 1904. The Rev. Dr. R. H. Warden was unanimously elected chairman, the Rev. Dr. Sutherland was appointed Secretary and Rev. F. J. Day and Rev. E. D. McLaren associate secretaries. There were grave initial difficulties but these were overcome and the way was cleared for further progress. This conference was one of the most significant ecclesiastical gatherings held in Canada up to that time. Under the heading, "A Significant Gathering," the *Globe* of December 23, 1904, remarks, "The composition of the conference, the personal worth and representative character of the members, the purpose of the meeting, the questions under deliberation, the temper of the discussions, and the tendency and prospects of the movement, all combine to make the gathering significant. In its issue it may be epoch-making. The organic union of these three Churches in Canada is by no means assured, but the most conservative and doubtful man in the conference was impressed with the apparent yielding of even the stubborn obstacles. It may take years, it may take more than a decade, but a movement was begun yesterday which will tell powerfully not only on the three churches named, but on all the churches in Canada, on the public life of the country, and on

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the history of the world. The action of this joint committee was the first formal step. That step was the beginning of a new era in the religious history of Canada." On being interviewed by the *Daily Mail and Empire*, Dr. E. D. McLaren, General Secretary of the Presbyterian Home Mission Board and one of the associate secretaries of the Joint Committee, said, "The effect can hardly fail to be very considerable. The direct effect—the effect upon those who were present at the conference—was very marked. Those who were strongly desirous of union before had their desire strengthened and found in the discussions that took place an enlarged basis for their hopes; while those who were of a different view, if not converted to the union idea, were at least powerfully impressed by the considerations urged and by the spirit displayed." At the same time he thought that the chief peril to the union movement was the possibility of zeal outrunning discretion and undue haste arousing a spirit of antagonism.

It was universally recognized in the joint committee "that a question so important and far-reaching in its results was not one to be unduly hurried; that a union of the Churches, to be real and lasting, must carry the consent of the entire membership, and that no final step could be taken until ample opportunity had been given to consider the whole question in the courts of the various Churches and by the people generally." At the same time, it was recognized by many in the

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Churches that no movement of this kind was ever put into effect with absolute unanimity. The union of Presbyterianism in Canada in 1875 did not carry with it every member or even every congregation, and it seemed almost too much to hope that the wider union proposed could be consummated without dissentients.

The practical result of the conference was that five sub-committees were appointed to consider, respectively, all questions of Doctrine, Polity, The Ministry, Administration and Law. The following were the members of the committees on Doctrine and Polity:

DOCTRINE—Presbyterian: Principal Scrimger (Convener), Dr. Armstrong, Dr. Battisby, Rev. G. S. Carson, Dr. DuVal, Principal Falconer, Principal Gordon, Dr. MacKay, Dr. J. L. Murray, Principal McLaren, Dr. Ramsay, Dr. Sedgwick, Rev. T. Stewart, Hon. W. M. Clark, Dr. Robert Murray and Dr. Walter Paul. Methodist: Chancellor Burwash (Convener), Revs. Drs. Carman, Shaw, Paisley, Langford, Curtis, Stewart, Antliff, Crothers, Ryckman, Revs. R. F. Stacey, D. W. Johnston and S. Bond, and Messrs. Amès, Ferguson and Mann. Congregational: Rev. Dr. Warriner (Convener), Revs. F. J. Day, J. P. Gerrie, T. B. Hyde, Hugh Pedley, J. K. Unsworth and Messrs. J. R. Dougall and H. O'Hara.

POLITY—Presbyterian: Prof. Walter C. Murray (Convener), Revs. Drs. Bryce, Campbell, Farquharson, Herridge, Lyle, MacGillivray, Millar, Rev.

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J. B. Mullen, Principal Patrick, Dr. James Stewart, and Messrs James Gibson, T. C. James, J. A. Macdonald, G. M. Macdonell and W. B. McMurrich. Methodist: Mr. Justice McLaren (Convener), Revs. Drs. Carman and White, Revs. Mavety, Steel, Crews, Griffith, Langille and Messrs. Harris, Inch, Fudger, Bishop, Bell, Aikins, Senator Cox and Mr. Justice Britton. Congregational: Rev. J. W. Pedley (Convener), Revs. F. J. Day, J. L. Gordon, W. T. Gunn, W. H. Warriner, D.D., and Messrs. J. R. Dougall T. B. Macaulay and H. O'Hara.

THE BASIS OF UNION

In June, 1905, the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada adopted as a whole the report of the Joint Committee. In December of the same year at the second Conference of the Committee, interim reports from the sub-committees were received. The report of the Committee on Doctrine showed that the object of those charged with finding a common basis of doctrine had been to include the characteristic features of each communion and to fuse these elements in the new statement rather than to reach a compromise. The committee embodied in its report a tentative Doctrinal Basis derived in the main from (1) A Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith, published by the authority of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. in 1902, (2) A Doctrinal summary prepared by the Montreal Section of the

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Joint Committee on the basis of the English Presbyterian "Articles of Faith." There were nineteen articles in this preliminary statement and some years later an Article on Prayer was added. Presbyteries, Sessions and Congregations were asked to give information and suggestions for the guidance of the Union Committee, but subsequent changes were few and were mainly of sequence and wording. Sub-committees were formed to deal with the questions of ministerial support, missions, benevolent funds, public interests and colleges. The work of drawing up the Basis extended over a period of five years, and was done with ample deliberation and full co-operation. Each conference of the Joint Committee received and revised the results reached by the sub-committees. Then after being considered, analyzed and revised by the denominational sections meeting separately, the documents were again considered by the Joint Committee in the light of any suggestions offered. As thus amended, the Basis was published each year for the information of the negotiating churches and was finally endorsed by the Joint Committee in full session in 1908.

By this time the Presbyterian General Assembly had recorded its satisfaction that union seemed practicable. Not only were the main terms of union now defined but it was clearly seen which churches would be prepared to continue negotiations. Approaches had been made to the Baptist and Anglican Churches. The Baptist reply was a polite

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but firm refusal, in which was set forth definitively the characteristic Baptist principles. These principles, it was stated, made it necessary for the Baptists "to maintain a separate organized existence." The Anglican Church was sympathetic but the question of the historic episcopate was still an insuperable barrier to organic union. Negotiations were thus limited to the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches.

Meantime the negotiating Churches had moved definitely towards union. The Congregational Union of Canada had already decided in 1904 that organic union was both desirable and practicable. In 1909 it sent down the documents of the Basis of Union to the churches for consideration, with the result that of a membership of 10,689 there were 2,933 votes for and 813 against the Basis. The Congregational Union thereupon decided that it had already taken sufficient action and would wait until the other denominations had tested the feeling of their constituency.

The General Conference of the Methodist Church in 1910 declared its approval of the documents agreed upon by the Joint Committee as a Basis of Union. It directed its special committee to send the documents "to the District Meetings for consideration, and to the Annual Conference for consideration and adoption or rejection." If the reports of the Annual Conferences warranted such action the Basis of Union was to be sent to the Official Boards and the membership of the churches

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“for consideration and adoption or rejection.” The result of the vote by Conferences was that eleven Conferences voted approval and one non-approval. The whole question was then referred to the Official Boards and membership of the church. Of 29,820 officials, 23,475 voted for and 3,869 against. Of 293,967 members, eighteen years and over, 150,841 voted for and 24,357 against. Of 29,373 members under eighteen, 17,198 voted for and 2,615 against. Of adherents, 42,115 voted for and 7,234 against. Thereupon the General Conference Special Committee declared itself “satisfied that the Methodist Church is now prepared to proceed toward the union of the three negotiating churches on the Basis of Union heretofore agreed upon.” (Minutes, July 16 and 17, 1912.) The minority in the Methodist Church was vigorous and determined, but once the verdict of the church was given to enter the union, they deemed it their Christian duty to follow the decision of the majority.

Hereafter the history of the union movement is largely a record of the course of events within the Presbyterian Church. The Methodist Church and the Congregational Churches had decided the question according to their prescribed constitutional procedure and were prepared for union. They now awaited the verdict of the Presbyterian Church. Within the Presbyterian Church there was sharp difference of opinion and determined opposition to the scheme of union.

In 1910 the General Assembly of the Presby-

terian Church declared its approval of the documents agreed upon by the Joint Committee as a Basis of Union and directed that "this resolution, along with the Basis, be transmitted to Presbyteries for their judgment under the Barrier Act." Exception was taken to the employment of the Barrier Act at this point on the ground that the next Assembly could enact the union without consulting the people, and an organized party of opposition came into being. During the period of the voting, an anonymous pamphlet advocating federation and "solemnly and earnestly protesting" against union, was circulated. The report of the vote by Presbyteries was, that of the seventy Presbyteries of the Church, sixty-seven voted on the question. Fifty Presbyteries voted to approve while twenty did not signify approval in terms of the Barrier Act. The votes cast in Presbyteries were—793 approved, and 476 voted non-approval.

The Presbyterian General Assembly resolved to find out the views of Sessions and Congregations and sent the whole question to them for their judgment. The vote was as follows: In answer to the question, "Are you in favor of organic union with the Methodist and Congregational Churches?" the percentage of those voting in favor was sixty-one per cent. of the elders, seventy-two per cent. of the communicants, seventy-two per cent. of the adherents. The Basis was voted on separately, and approved by seventy per cent. of the Elders, seventy-four per cent. of the communicants and seventy-

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three per cent. of the adherents who voted. The meeting of the next Assembly at Edmonton in 1912 was a memorable occasion, and the conviction seemed almost overwhelming that the guiding hand of the Lord was leading His Church in the direction of union. When, however, Principal MacKay strongly urged delay for further conference and discussion, and advanced the prospect of greater and possibly practical unanimity, the advocates of union hesitated. According to Presbyterian constitutional methods, the decision of Presbyteries warranted the immediate consummation of union. But in view of the extent of the minority the Assembly delayed action, hoping that by further conference and discussion practically unanimous action could be secured within a reasonable time. (Minutes of Assembly, 1912.)

In the meantime, the Basis was reconsidered in the separate committees and by the joint committee and slight amendments were made. When the Presbyterian General Assembly of 1915 met at Kingston the interest was at fever heat. This Assembly was the largest in the history of the church up to this time and everyone regarded the result as critical and to a degree decisive. The amended Basis had been accepted by the other negotiating churches and they were reported to be ready and waiting with appreciable impatience the word to go or stop from the Presbyterians. To accentuate the tension, just before the Commissioners started for the General Assembly, a plausible

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and strong appeal, signed by Dr. E. Scott, Editor of the *Record*, Montreal, was issued broadcast from Vancouver to Sydney, urging the Presbyterians, on account of the present war, to call a halt in the union negotiations. And as if to balance matters, a circular came round, issued by some friends of union, entitled "Church Union, an Opportunity and a Duty," written by a number of prominent Presbyterians. It was no wonder, then, that this debate was considered to be crucial. Moreover, for years the opposition seemed to be increasing, judged by the voting of the Assembly. The previous year the opposition vote in the Assembly reached the high-water mark of 109 as against 286 in favor of union, or twenty-nine per cent. of the entire vote. A larger number than usual had come to the Assembly halting upon the question and it was more than ever uncertain how the Committee's report would be supported. The debate, although heated at times, was conducted with perfect good nature on both sides. The result was that the amended Basis of Union was approved by a vote of 368 for and 74 against, and the General Assembly directed that the Basis be submitted to Presbyteries for their judgment under the Barrier Act and that the Appendix on Law be also submitted to Presbyteries for their judgment. The General Assembly further directed that the question of union be submitted to Sessions and also to communicants and adherents of the church, reminding them that the decision must be reached on the basis of votes cast.

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Thus in 1915, after twelve years of discussion and revision, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada declared its approval of the Basis of Union as a basis on which the Church might unite with the Methodist and Congregational Churches. Again, according to the constitution of the Church the matter had been sent down under the Barrier Act to all the Presbyteries for their verdict. But in order that everyone who had any right to give an opinion might have the opportunity, it had also been sent to the congregations. The vote of the people, which in the Presbyterian Church has no constitutional authority in such matters, was considered to be worth much as giving information for the guidance of the Court.

When the vote was taken it was found that the usual slowness of a people to exercise their franchise had shown itself again, for not much more than fifty-two per cent. of the members voted. On the whole, there was an increase in the number of votes against the Basis of Union. Of the communicants voting, a fraction over sixty per cent. voted for and a fraction under forty per cent. voted against. The vote of adherents was sixty-three per cent. in favor. Ninety-six per cent. of the entire eldership voted on the question, and of those voting, sixty-five per cent. were in favor of the Basis. The results of this vote were announced to the Church before the Presbyteries acted, in order that they might know the mind of the eldership and the membership before considering the question. Next, the Presby-

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teries took up the matter, and their vote was more favorable to union than before. Of those who sent in valid returns, there were three ties, fifty-three in favor and thirteen disapproved the remit.

The results of the vote were reported to the General Assembly at Winnipeg in 1916, and on the ground of the vote in favor of union by adherents, members, elders and Presbyteries, this Assembly decided to consummate union. The majority for Union was still a large one, in spite of the vigorous campaign of the opposition. The people had given their opinion by a majority that in any other case would be considered overwhelming. Assembly believed it was large enough to warrant advance, and resolved, by a vote of 406 to 90, to unite with the Methodist and Congregational Churches of Canada. Such a decision seemed to be amply justified by the vote although a number disagreed with it. A committee to carry out the Assembly's policy and co-operate with other committees in preparing legislation to be sought in the Dominion and Provincial legislatures was appointed. At the same time it agreed to postpone the reception of the Committee's report until the "first Assembly following the end of the first year after the close of the war."

The next General Assembly urged upon the people that debate and organized propaganda should be discontinued until the question should again be taken up in Assembly, and an agreement was reached that there should be a truce. At the same

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time this Assembly unanimously agreed upon a method of co-operation. A number of independent union charges were being formed in the West, and it was felt on all sides that since such action broke their connection with historic Christianity and cut them off not only from their parent Churches but also from the great missionary enterprise, it was inadvisable in their own interests as well as in the interests of Canadian Christianity. So the General Assembly adopted a new policy drawn up by representatives of the three negotiating Churches; namely, to encourage the formation of local unions but to keep each union church in connection with one or other or both or all of the historic denominations until the consummation of the larger Union. This scheme was unanimously adopted and many local unions were formed, particularly in the Western Provinces and in New Ontario, all organized according to the policy outlined in the Basis of Union for The United Church of Canada, and always with a view to the approaching Union. The scheme was successful as a temporary measure, but could not have been possible unless the wider union had been in view. At the same time this directed and controlled a movement that would have continued, and undoubtedly gathered momentum, had organic union not ultimately been consummated.

The debate on union was resumed at the General Assembly of 1921, which took a further step towards union by resolving to consummate organic union with the Methodist and Congregational Churches

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of Canada "as expeditiously as possible." The vote was 404 to 107. A committee on union was appointed composed of both those in favor of union and those opposed to it, with Dr. Geo. C. Pidgeon as Convener.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURE

The controversy within the Church was resumed with great intensity and minority protests were lodged at every important stage of the proceedings. The previously organized opposition to union, known as the Committee for the Preservation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, had become the Presbyterian Church Association in 1916, pledged "to maintain and continue The Presbyterian Church in Canada." Practical unanimity was now impossible for it was clear that the price of obtaining it would be the surrender of the whole principle of organic union. The church was sharply divided on the question of majority and minority rights. Union had been repeatedly delayed in the hope that the unanimity which had been expected in the first place might be brought nearer. Progressive steps had led the church to the verge of consummating union and she was already committed by the large number of Union congregations in the West. But the minority was organized to prevent the will of the majority from being carried into effect. Was the minority to be allowed to block so great a movement? The Presbyteries first and then the Assembly had decided on union, and in the Presby-

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terian system the decision of the Courts is binding on the whole Church.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Presbyterian Church, as one great branch of the Church Catholic, has, by its own choice, a particular constitution and a particular method of common action, namely, through representative Courts—in other words, through Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods and General Assemblies. This government by Presbyters is the very genius of Presbyterianism. It is a representative system, not a system of direct government. It is government by the will of the people certainly, but by the will of the people as expressed through their representatives in the Courts of the Church. An appeal to the people against their own Courts is something apart from Presbyterianism. There has always been, of course, the right of dissent, and that has often been acted upon; but it always has been an act of dissent *from* the action of the Church and the Church itself followed the lines of the constitutional decision of its Courts. Article II of the Articles Declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland in matters spiritual (1921) states, "Its government is Presbyterian and is executed through Kirk-Sessions, Presbyteries, Provincial Synods and General Assemblies." That is, the Presbyterian Church acts through its Courts. The General Assembly is the highest Court of the Church and

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when the Assembly acts by a majority, under the authority of the Barrier Act which refers certain questions under discussion to the vote of Presbyteries, the final constitutional action has been taken. Minority protests do not alter this fact. The action of the Scottish Presbyterian Churches, for example, followed Presbyterian order, when in 1921 the proposals for union between the Church of Scotland and The United Free Church were embodied in a Bill which was never sent down to the congregations but was decided by the Courts of the Churches. In The Presbyterian Church in Canada a strictly legal and constitutional procedure had been followed and the church had decided to enter the union. Consequently the majority felt that they were bound by their principles to act in accordance with the decision of the church's Court, acting as these had done, in a constitutional manner.

LEGISLATION

The Joint Committee on Church Union met in 1921 and appointed a standing committee to consider and report on the legislation necessary to give effect to the union. It also received a representative of the General Council of Local Union Churches who assured the committee that the local union churches were ready to merge into The United Church of Canada as soon as the contemplated union was effected. Meantime, after much careful deliberation, the Presbyterian Committee united in an effort to explore the legal requirements of the

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situation to the extent of preparing drafts of the legislation which would be required to give effect to the instructions of the Assembly. Able legal counsel was obtained and the whole field of legislation affecting the Presbyterian Church in Canada was surveyed. Counsel were of opinion that "in order to combine and co-ordinate properly the various funds and schemes of The United Church, it is necessary to have all these organizations combined, and in our opinion, this can be done effectively only through legislation which unites and merges these many corporations into one body. The Committee then instructed Counsel to prepare such draft Bills as would be necessary for the confirmation of union, in such a way as to conserve the rights and interests of all concerned. The preparation of the Bills was a serious task but was carried out thoroughly by the Joint Legal Committee. In April, 1923, the General Assembly's representative Committee on Church Union met and considered the Bills and a number of amendments were suggested which were referred to the Committee on Law for consideration. One of the points emphasized in these and preceding discussions was that no legislation was necessary for an ecclesiastical union: legislation is necessary only in the church's temporal affairs and relationships. Already in 1908 the Joint Legal Committee (after considering for a year a report on the principles of legislation) had decided upon the necessity of legislation and the general form it should take. The method consis-

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tently followed in Canada had been to seek enabling legislation prior to consummating the union of Churches. In accordance with this principle, legislation was now sought, in order to incorporate the United Church, to preserve property rights and render impossible a repetition of what happened in Scotland in 1904. An example was given by the Church of Scotland Act passed by the Imperial Parliament in 1921 which states: "The declaratory articles are lawful articles and the Constitution of the Church of Scotland in matters spiritual is as therein set forth." Among these is Article VII which reads, "The Church of Scotland, believing it to be the will of Christ that His disciples should be all one in the Father and in Him, that the world may believe that the Father has sent Him, recognizes the obligation to seek and promote union with other Churches in which it finds the Word to be purely preached, the sacraments administered according to Christ's ordinance, and discipline rightly exercised; and it has the right to unite with any such Church without loss of its identity on terms which this Church finds to be consistent with these Articles."

PRINCIPLES OF THE LEGISLATION

This principle was carefully provided for in the legislation sought by the uniting Churches in Canada. The principle was set forth that when a church by its own constitutional procedure decides to unite with another Church, it does not thereby

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vote itself out of existence, but enters as a unit into a new relationship, and carries its rights and privileges and powers with it. It was made clear that the United Church would possess spiritual freedom, and be independent in all matters of doctrine, discipline and polity. The right of the church to re-state its faith was carefully safeguarded. The legislation provided that the negotiating churches would take with them into the Union all the denominational property which would then be vested in the United Church. But at the same time provision was made for dissenting minorities. Any congregation, which within six months of the proclamation of Union decided by a majority vote not to concur, could hold its property solely for its own benefit. Subsequently this clause was amended at the request of the supporters of union, when the Bill was before the Private Bills Committee at Ottawa, in order to remove any appearance of coercion. The Act as passed allowed the vote to be taken by all congregations throughout the Dominion with the exception of those in New Brunswick and Manitoba during the six months' period between 16th December, 1924, and 10th June, 1925. The votes according to the New Brunswick and Manitoba Statutes could be taken by congregations in these Provinces only between 10th June, 1925, and 10th December, 1925.

The principles and form of the proposed legislation were approved by the three negotiating churches. The Congregational Union in 1922 de-

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plored any further delay, and in accordance with its constitution submitted the draft legislation for the Dominion and Provincial Legislatures and Trusts of Model Deed to the various Congregational incorporated Societies and Funds, and to the individual churches. All the incorporated Societies and Funds and an overwhelming majority of the churches gave their approval. At the next meeting of the Congregational Union in 1923, the draft of the proposed legislation was approved and the Union Committee was appointed with power to act with the Committees of the other two negotiating Churches in procuring legislation and taking any action necessary to consummate the union. At the General Conference of 1922 the Methodist Church approved the principle and in general the form of the proposed Acts and appointed a committee of forty with full power to act on its behalf in securing their enactment. The General Assembly of 1923 decided by a vote of 427 to 129 to "proceed forthwith" to the consummation of union upon the terms of the draft Bills as presented.

A new scheme of Federation was brought before this Assembly by Dr. Daniel R. Drummond and fully discussed, but was rejected in favor of union by a vote of 444 to 92. Federation had been brought forward several times but had never captured the mind of the Churches. It was proposed as early as 1894 and had been under discussion for years afterwards. The scheme of Dr. Drummond went further in the way of compromise than those

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brought forward in the General Assemblies of 1909 and 1910, but, like them, it involved co-operation and the union of small charges only. In other words, it recognized the principle of union for economic but not for spiritual reasons. This was regarded by the General Assembly as an unworthy compromise. If union was good enough for some districts, why was it not good enough for all? It was felt that the principle of union was already involved where, in Federation, rural congregations of different denominations might meet for worship under the care of one denomination.

Later in 1923 a Bureau of Literature and Information was instituted under the charge of Dr. R. J. Wilson in an attempt to spread knowledge of the principles of union and the procedure that was being followed.

THE WRIT

Following the action of the General Assembly, in 1923, the approved legislation was sought in the Dominion and Provincial Parliaments. To prevent this a Writ was filed in the Supreme Court of Ontario in January, 1924, claiming that the General Assembly had no right to effect the Union, because in modifying its adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith in the interests of Union, it had departed from and renounced adherence to certain essential doctrines of the Presbyterian faith contained in the Confession, in such a way that it forfeited all right to call itself Presby-

terian. Among the omissions cited were the clauses stating that "God has eternally predestined a fixed number of men and angels to eternal life" and that "others God has decreed to death." (Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 3); that "Christ died only for those who shall be saved," i.e., the elect, and that "those not appointed unto life God passes by" (Confession of Faith, Chapter 3); that "man is born totally depraved and utterly helpless to accomplish or even to prepare for his own salvation" (Confession of Faith, Chapter 9). These, among others, were claimed to be the "distinctive doctrines of Presbyterianism." But Presbyterian Churches throughout the world already held the right to adapt the expression of their faith to new truth. In 1887 the Presbyterian Church in Canada had affirmed its right constitutionally to revise her standards and had deleted a clause from the Confession of 1889. In this she was not departing from Presbyterian standards, for the Scottish Churches themselves had modified their adherence to the Westminster Confession. The Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church passed Declaratory Acts recognizing and sanctioning liberty of judgment and diversity of opinion on certain points and declaring in what sense alone they accept certain positions referred to in the Confession. Other Churches, the Church of Scotland, for example, modified their formulæ of subscription to the Confession, while the English Presbyterian Church went further and drew up a new doctrinal

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statement setting forth in twenty-four articles "the fundamental doctrines held and taught by this Church." American Presbyterian Churches also made distinct revisions in their standards. That is to say, all the chief branches of the Presbyterian Church exercised the right, though in different ways, to modify their confession or their adherence to the Confession. The Writ was not pressed in the Courts.

DOMINION LEGISLATION

Application for legislation was made to the Dominion Parliament in April, 1924, and the Bill was passed at that session of the Federal Parliament. The Presbyterian General Assembly met at Owen Sound, and, after a spirited debate, by the decisive vote of 429 to 96, defeating a contrary amendment by 444 to 92, urged the Federal Parliament to grant the legislation applied for without proposed amendments. The Bill had been introduced into the House of Commons as a Private Members Bill by Robert Forke, Esquire, leader of the Progressive Group, and after receiving its first and second readings was referred to the Private Bills Committee. Here the applicants and those opposed to the Bill presented their case and a keenly-contested struggle followed. Both employed the ablest Counsel and the atmosphere of the Committee Rooms was tense. For several weeks lawyers, clergymen and members of Parliament cross-examined each other on Creed, Property Rights, Church History, Church Constitu-

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tions, Foreign Missions, Calvinism, Armenianism and the rights of dissenters. It was a courageous and intense struggle in which the opponents of union contested the Bill up to the last few hours before the Committee. An amendment was passed by a vote of 27 to 23 by which the coming into force of the Act was deferred until 1st July, 1926, with a provision that in the meantime the question of the power of the General Assembly to bind the church by their agreement to unite with the other two negotiating churches, should be referred to the Courts. At subsequent meetings of the Committee, the remaining clauses of the Bill were passed without division and a motion to rescind the amendment was ruled out of order. The Bill was then reported to the House.

In the Debate in the House the leaders of all three parties took an active part. The chief proponent of the Bill was the Right Honorable Arthur Meighen who set forth the position of Parliament in respect to this legislation. He made clear the power of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to change its doctrine and pointed out that even if such were not the case, Parliament should pass the Bill in order to remove any disability under which the church might therefore be laboring. On the 26th of June, an amendment was passed by the House by a vote of 110 to 58 which rescinded the Private Bills Committee's amendment and substituted a clause by which the Act, with the exception of the voting provisions, was brought into

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force on 10th of June, 1925. Further suggested amendments by opponents of the Bill were negative and on the 4th of July the Bill received its third reading. The Dominion Act was finally passed on the 19th of July, 1924, and followed in the main the legislation applied for. It provided for a Dominion Property Commission with power to make settlements in regard to the Colleges and in the sharing of denominational property.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION

When the Bill came before the Ontario Legislature in the winter of 1924 strenuous efforts were made to defeat it. An amendment was adopted by the Private Bills Committee which destroyed the central principle of the Bill for it would have prevented the three churches, as such, from uniting, and authorized instead only a union of congregations which might separate themselves from the parent churches. The union leaders felt that this denied to the churches all right of corporate action and self-determination. For, if after more than twenty years of prayerful study and deliberation, and by constitutional methods, the three churches had decided that for the furtherance of true religion in Canada they should come together, it was raising the whole question of spiritual freedom in its most acute form for the State to interfere. The Bill was therefore withdrawn. Next year the Bill was passed in a somewhat altered form, but with the main principle intact. An amendment provided

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for the vesting of the lands and buildings of Knox College in the non-concurring congregations subject to joint occupation by The United Church for three years. The Bill provided for the creation of a Church Property Commission to relieve cases of hardship alleged by minorities in congregations. This Provincial Commission held frequent sittings and made a number of property adjustments.

In 1924 the Act was passed by the Legislatures of Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan with comparatively little opposition, while in British Columbia the only important change provided for the appointment of a Provincial Commission on congregational property. In Nova Scotia, in New Brunswick and in Prince Edward Island it was passed with some minor amendments in each case, but at Prince Edward Island the Lieutenant-Governor refused his assent and the Bill had to be re-enacted the following year.

Application was made to the Quebec Legislature in February, 1925. It declared itself ready to adopt the principle of the Bill and to give effect to the Federal Legislation providing that the Province of Ontario, the province which, owing to the large percentage of its Protestant population was most interested in such union, ratified the Union Act as adopted by the Parliament of Canada. As the Ontario Legislature passed the Bill the following month, application was again made to the Quebec Legislature in March, 1926, and the Bill was passed in form somewhat different from the Acts passed in

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the other Provincial Legislatures. The Quebec Act confirmed and made valid the Dominion Act to the same extent as if repeated in the Provincial Act. After lengthy negotiations an amendment was made whereby the real property and Charter of the Presbyterian College, Montreal, was vested in the non-concurring Church. Provision was also made for the appointment of a Commission with powers practically the same as those conferred upon the Ontario Commission.

THE CONSUMMATION OF UNION

On the 10th of June, 1925, the three Churches united to become The United Church of Canada. The union was consummated at a large and inspiring inaugural service held in Toronto, when The United Church hallowed the union and dedicated itself before God to its great task. This initial service was wholly religious and deeply spiritual, culminating in the celebration of the Holy Communion. The Basis of Union was signed by the duly appointed representatives of the uniting Churches, the Rev. Geo. C. Pidgeon, D.D., Moderator of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Rev. W. H. Warriner, D.D., Chairman of the Union of Congregational Churches, Rev. S. D. Chown, D.D., LL.D., General Superintendent of the Methodist Church and Rev. C. S. Elsey, Chairman of the General Council of Local Union Churches of Western Canada. This was followed by Prayer constituting the three Supreme Courts of the uniting churches

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as the General Council of The United Church of Canada. At a subsequent meeting, Dr. Geo. C. Pidgeon was elected as the Moderator of the first General Council, after the venerable Methodist leader, Dr. Chown, in a "fine act of self-effacing renunciation," had asked that he be not nominated and moved that Dr. Pidgeon be elected.

As a result of a vote by congregations, 784 Presbyterian congregations, of a total of 4,512, refused to enter the Union, and eight of the Congregational Churches did not follow the Congregational Churches into Union. The total membership of the Presbyterian Church in Canada which voted non-concurrence was a little over thirty per cent. Thus the numerical strength of The United Church of Canada was impressive. Into the Church there entered 4,797 congregations of the Methodist Church, 166 congregations of the Congregational Church, and 3,728 congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, bringing the total on June 10, 1925, to 8,691. The union of the three denominations was actually effected with a loss of less than eight and one-half per cent. of the total congregations, and with a loss of about twelve per cent. of the self-sustaining charges. Still more striking has been the attitude of the foreign missionaries in distant lands. Of the 655 missionaries in the three uniting churches on June 10, 1925, only 17 (including men, wives and single women) did not enter the union.

THE DOMINION PROPERTY COMMISSION

The Dominion Property Commission was faced with a heavy task in the division of the assets of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, but attacked its problems with great thoroughness. The Boards of The United Church and the non-concurring Presbyterian congregations were able to reach an agreement for the division of Home Mission Property and Foreign Mission Fields and property. British Guiana, North Formosa and the Gwalior and Southern Bhil districts in Central India went to the non-concurring congregations and in the interests of the work some of The United Church missionaries remained voluntarily for a time in these fields. The following fields founded and maintained by The Presbyterian Church in Canada remained with The United Church: Trinidad, Honan (North China), South China, Shanghai, Korea and the remaining sections of Central India.

The final award of the Dominion Commission was issued in April, 1927. Out of assets (of the Presbyterian Church in Canada) totalling approximately \$10,500,000.00, the non-concurring congregations received property and funds valued at \$3,261,000.00 (apart from their share of legacies vested as at June 10, 1925) or about thirty-one per cent. of the whole. This corresponded generally to the proportion of congregations and members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada which did not enter the union. Of this total the non-concurring

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congregations received approximately fifty per cent. of the College Buildings and endowments of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Knox College Building and the building and Charter of the Presbyterian College, Montreal, had already been vested in Trustees for the non-concurring congregations by the Ontario and Quebec Legislatures respectively. The Commission awarded them in addition the Charter of Knox College and about \$550,000.00 of endowments belonging to these Colleges. The other six Theological Colleges, their property and endowments, remained with The United Church. Of the total assets of the Pension Fund of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 77.96 per cent. continued vested in The United Church and the non-concurrents received 22.04 per cent. Similarly the latter received 23.3 per cent. of the Home Mission Funds and Properties and approximately 25 per cent. of the Foreign Mission Assets.

THE SPIRITUAL INHERITANCE OF THE NEW CHURCH

Far more impressive than the numerical strength was the spiritual heritage that entered the new church. Each of the uniting churches had a great heritage and there was no surrender of their particular inheritance when they entered the union. The Congregational Church looked back to those stirring days of the sixteenth century when the Divine Right of Kings took shape as a degrading

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tyranny and men were found ready to lay down their lives to secure spiritual freedom against the tyranny of man. It held in honor men like Milton who stood for the liberty of the individual. It brought with it the spirit of the Pilgrim Fathers and the devoted Pastor John Robinson. Historic Congregationalism put emphasis on loyalty to God and His truth as revealed in Jesus Christ. It brought to the union the inherited conviction of the rights of individual congregations and Christian freedom—a spirit which can continue in finer and more fruitful service in the larger fellowship.

The Methodist Church brought its inheritance of the great spiritual awakening which swept as a purifying ocean over the souls of men and saved the life of eighteenth-century England from infidelity and corruption. Its history proclaims the value of personal testimony to the saving grace of God and of the disciplined Christian life. It stood for the combination of zeal and discipline. It brought the ideals of John Wesley, the spirit of the Wesleys, Whitefield and many another who was afire with evangelical zeal. It brought its concern for social righteousness and, above all, for personal and experimental religion which has known and apprehended the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The Presbyterian Church entered the union with its whole heritage from the past unbroken. From the great days of the Scottish Reformation, through the later controversies when the freedom of the Church was contested in many a hard-fought battle

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the Presbyterian Church stood for the headship of Christ and the spiritual freedom of the Church under His sovereignty. She would allow no alien to dictate to her, whether in creed or in polity or in any other matter. It brought to the union the heritage of its spiritual heroes: Calvin in his production of strong Christian character, Knox and his demand for the freedom and authority of Assemblies. It brought the spirit of the Covenanters, some of noble and some of humble birth, but together facing death with the declaration on their dying lips that Christ's Kirk "maun be free." It was for Christ, for His words and His Gospel that they stood, rather than for particular standards. They died for the freedom of the Church under Him.

Such were the three streams of tradition which entered the new Church. The United Church was proud of this heritage and took its stand upon the sovereignty of God, the Headship of Christ over the Church, the freedom of the Church under Him, the denial of worldly interference and the universality and power of the Gospel as the only agency for making Canada a true nation and winning the world for Christ. At the same time its new outlook was to the future and it determined to overcome the errors of the past, in order that those elements for which each Church stood and which to a certain extent were common to all, should find even fuller expression than before.

There has been no break with the historic continuity of Presbyterianism, Methodism and Con-

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gregationalism the world over. In spite of the regrettable loss of non-concurring minorities, each of the uniting churches entered union as an entity, taking with it what was vital in its life and traditions. The "Pan-Presbyterian" Alliance admitted The United Church of Canada as one of the Presbyterian family. Its documents and statements of doctrine and polity were examined separately by the Eastern and Western Committees of the Alliance, both of which recommended recognition. Their reports were presented at Cardiff to the full Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System which met in June, 1925. Both in the Business Committee and in the Council without any hesitation or any question being asked, The United Church was admitted as a member of the Presbyterian body. This was done by men who knew that application was being made for association with world-wide Methodism and Congregationalism.

The Presbyterian Churches in Ireland and Scotland have extended their recognition to The United Church of Canada. In June, 1926, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland unanimously resolved "That the fraternal relations which subsisted between The Presbyterian Church in Canada and this Church shall subsist between the continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada and this Church, and that there be similar fraternal relations between The United Church of Canada and this Church." The Assemblies of the

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Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland took up the matter in the spring of 1927, after special committees had carefully considered the whole question of relationships. The Assembly of the Church of Scotland received, but did not adopt the report of a special committee. Instead it adopted certain findings which stated, among other things, that it was pleased to enter into fraternal relations with the General Council of The United Church of Canada, stating further that "The Church of Scotland cherishes an especial affinity with the Presbyterians of Canada, both with those who have deemed it their duty to maintain a Presbyterian Church, and with those who have allied their devotion with like-minded brethren in The United Church of Canada." The United Free Church adopted the recommendations of the Assembly's special committee including a statement that "the United Free Church of Scotland while deploring the existing division, desires to maintain cordial relations with both The United Church of Canada and the continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada. . . ." Further, the committees on union of the Church of Scotland and of the United Free Church of Scotland, consisting of one hundred members from each church, appointed sub-committees on Relations with Other Churches. The report of its sub-committees was adopted unanimously in joint session of the Union Committees and approved generally by the Assemblies of both Churches. The effect of the recommendation is

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that The United Church of Canada will bear exactly the same relation to the proposed (United) Church of Scotland as will other Presbyterian Churches in the overseas Dominions and in the United States of America.

The United Church of Canada has also been acclaimed as a member of the Methodist family. The representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States of America on the International Methodist Committee adopted a resolution on 13th January, 1926, stating that "this meeting while recognizing that The United Church of Canada is not entirely Methodistic in all its marks and characteristics, hereby endorses without dissent, the request from The United Church of Canada that it be recognized as a member of The Ecumenical Methodist Conference, and of its committees. On the 19th of May, 1926, the Eastern Section of the International Committee of Methodism, after careful consideration of all the issues involved, unanimously passed a resolution to the same effect, recognizing The United Church of Canada as a member of the Ecumenical Methodist Conference and its Committees, together with the privileges and responsibilities thereby entailed.

The United Church of Canada also made application to World-wide Congregationalism for recognition, with the result that both the Executive Committee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales and the Committee of the National Congregational Council of the United States of

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America gave their hearty approval to The United Church.

The fact that The United Church is a member of these three families makes Church Union significant beyond the bounds of Canada. It is the first practical proof that the separate denominations may become one, without loss of identity, and so bring about gradually even greater unions in the years to come.

—KENNETH H. COUSLAND

PART TWO

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CHAPTER I

"THE SPIRIT OF UNITY"

The Church, formed by the union of the "Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches in Canada," and named "The United Church of Canada," came into existence as the realization of a vision, the consummation of a devout desire, and the issue of a well-defined historical movement. These are set forth, with full knowledge, by Professor McNeil in his notable volume entitled "The Presbyterian Church in Canada." That Church, in its unified form, and its separate existence dating from 1875, was the outcome of faith and prayer, and heroic endeavor. But it was not regarded by its founders or leaders as the goal, to which the Head of the Church was guiding His people. The eyes of believing and enlightened men in the Presbyterian Church were fixed upon a richer union and a larger fellowship.

Men of lofty Christian idealism in the Methodist and Congregational Churches were moved by the same inspiration, and prayed and worked for the prevalence of the spirit of unity among all who acknowledged Christ as Saviour and Lord, and for the creation of a church, in which that Spirit

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would find visible and organic expression. Such a Church, combining in one full volume, streams that had hitherto flowed separately, came into being in June, 1925, and was inaugurated in a service of Holy Communion, in which the Presence of the Lord and the Power of the Spirit were singularly manifest. Those, who rejoiced in this Union, however, did not believe that even so great an achievement was the highest and best that God has in store for His people in Canada. Their gaze was still fixed on a further goal.

The General Introduction to the Basis of Union declares plainly that the policy of The United Church shall be "to foster the Spirit of Unity in the hope that this sentiment of unity may in due time take shape in a Church, which may fittingly be described as "national," Canada a nation—the Canadian people gathered into the unity of a national church—toward such a goal, distant though it may be. The United Church is one significant step

GENERAL

1. The name of the Church formed by the union of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational Churches in Canada, shall be "The United Church of Canada."

2. It shall be the policy of The United Church to foster the spirit of unity in the hope that this sentiment of unity may in due time, so far as Canada is concerned, take shape in a Church which may fittingly be described as national.

DOCTRINE

We, the representatives of the Presbyterian, the Methodist, and the Congregational branches of the Church of Christ in Canada, do

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hereby set forth the substance of the Christian faith, as commonly held among us. In doing so, we build upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. We affirm our belief in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the primary source and ultimate standard of Christian faith and life. We acknowledge the teaching of the great creeds of the ancient Church. We further maintain our allegiance to the evangelical doctrines of the Reformation, as set forth in common in the doctrinal standards adopted by the Presbyterian Church in Canada, by the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, and by the Methodist Church. We present the accompanying statement as a brief summary of our common faith and commend it to the studious attention of the members and adherents of the negotiating Churches, as in substance agreeable to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE: "THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH"

The United Church as a living branch of the universal Church of Christ shares in the great missionary enterprise, which has for its nearer horizon the Dominion of Canada, and for its farther field the nations of mankind. It is incumbent, therefore, on the Church to make clear to itself the contents of its Gospel message, and to declare them to all whom it approaches with its ministrations, in a manner as full and clear and persuasive as possible. The doctrinal part of the Basis of Union is an attempt to discharge this duty with the utmost simplicity and sincerity. In the paragraph, which serves as a preamble to the statement, certain of its characteristics are set forth.

I

THE PURPOSE OF THE STATEMENT

Let it be well understood that it does not contain, and does not profess to furnish a system of theology. It contains, indeed, the essential Christian verities, and does desire to give them sufficient expression. But it is not drawn up after the fashion of a treatise on systematic theology; and it avoids the elaboration of those Confessions, which belong to what we may call the Scholastic Period of Protestantism. The purpose of the statement is, in the language of the preamble, "to set forth the substance of the Christian faith," and it is presented to the members and adherents of The United Church, as "a brief summary of our common faith." In other words, the Church, in these twenty articles, seeks to be positive and constructive in its presentation of Christian truth. It avoids technicalities. It is studiously non-polemical and non-controversial. It endeavors to grasp and to utter the essential and universal elements of the Christian faith.

Such a statement is designed to serve such ends as the following: (a) To provide, as its name indicates, a doctrinal basis for union. It is true that agreement in respect of certain intellectual ideas does not of itself guarantee union, or even conduce to it. The ultimate source of Unity is not accessible to the intellect. But it is also true that serious divergence in the intellectual apprehension of Christianity would make the union of Christians in one organized

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society difficult, if not impossible. And it is true, likewise, that agreement in such apprehension will make the path to Union much more direct, if it does not even render organic union a matter of duty. When, accordingly, the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches began to negotiate regarding union, the deepest and most searching questions, they asked of one another, concerned the doctrinal positions, which they severally occupied. The considered result, reached after years of deeply earnest and prayerful deliberation, was that these three communions were at one in the essentials of the faith, and that such intellectual differences as existed did not warrant, still less demand, their existence as separate communities, witnessing in some measure against one another, and tending constantly to controversy and competition.

(b) To provide a document which could be effectively used in teaching. Nothing can be so important for the well being of a church as its growth in knowledge, i.e., in a believing apprehension of the great saving truths, by which it lives. Such growth is fostered by many influences, far more than can be enumerated. Parents are to introduce their children to the precious facts of the Christian Salvation. Fellow believers are to be in constant communication with one another, as to their common heritage in the wonders of Divine redeeming love. It is, however, the duty of the organized society to provide help for its members in such a work of edification. Such help is offered

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in the document before us. Each article contains some aspect of faith or duty, and may readily be used as a topic for study and discussion in a class, or as theme of discourse in the pulpit. The attention of ministers is specially directed to these articles, as providing subjects for a consecutive exposition of the central truths of our holy religion. Ministers are needlessly afraid of Christian doctrine, as though congregations preferred disquisitions on "topics of the day" to the presentation of the eternal values. The fact is probably quite the reverse. People readily tire of the subjects, which are served up to them daily in the Press. They come to church, burdened with care and sorrow, thrilling with hope or fear, keenly aware of the ultimate problems of life and the immemorial needs of man. They desire a sure word of promise. They want to know the truth regarding God and man and the issues of life. They are seeking for a Gospel, which shall irradiate the experiences of every day, and dispel the terrors of death, and send rays of hope into the dimness of that which lies beyond the grave. Let ministers bravely address themselves to great themes, and they will meet with appreciation and glad response.

(c) To serve as our church's testimony to the world: There can be no doubt that we are being challenged to say what we believe. And we are bound to meet the challenge. Our statement of our faith may be adversely criticized in one interest or another. Modernist and Fundamentalist may "rage furiously together." Our part is to speak

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out truly and fearlessly; and employ the old motto of the earls marischal of Scotland—"they say; what say they? let them say." Plain and vigorous testimony may offend many; but it will never hurt the church, that is brave enough to bear it. What have we to tell the men of our generation regarding God, and His ways with men, His redeeming work for them, and His claims upon them? The answer to this question is contained, briefly and summarily, but sufficiently, in this document. We are not offering a theory. We are describing an experience, and bearing a witness. This is the faith, which The United Church is maintaining as its sacred trust, and is seeking to vindicate by word and by deed.

Let it be further noted that this doctrinal statement makes no claim to infallibility or finality. The substance or essence of the Christian faith is here, communicated to believing men by the Word and Spirit of God, and received by them in loyalty and humility. But the form of human speech in which they convey their message to the church and the world has the imperfection, which must belong to all efforts to express in forms of human thought, and language, meanings that are eternal, and divine. Creed revision is the inherent right, and the continual duty, of a living Church. This is our "Confession of Faith." We are conscious of limitations and inadequacies in the intellectual form of our statement. It will be the duty of those who come after us to find a more fitting intellectual expression for the unchanging and inexhaustible

truth of the Gospel. We have sought, humbly and earnestly, to serve our own generation; and now we hand on the result of our toil, with prayer and hope, to the generation following.

II

THE FOUNDATION OF THE FAITH

The United Church is not tied to the traditions of the past, and does not exact from its members and office bearers adhesion to forms of thought, which, however serviceable in an older day, no longer avail to express the mind of the living church. The United Church has no speculative theories to announce, however attractive these might be to the modern investigator; nor does it set forth any new doctrine, however confidently it might be supported by argument. It goes back through the ages, and builds "upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets." That is to say, it has no elements in its faith other than those, which lie within the glorious fact, which is Jesus Christ Himself. Prophets in the Old Testament were filled with a great hope, whose fulfilment lay beyond their vision. The fulfilment came in the Person and Work of Jesus, the Messiah of Israel, the Saviour of Men. Apostles in the New Testament are men, to whom Jesus Christ has been made known in personal experience. Their function, appointed them by God, who has also endowed them by His Spirit for its discharge, is to be the interpreters of

Christ for the Church, and His witnesses for the whole world. In short, The United Church stands for New Testament Christianity. The fabric of its faith was reared by men divinely called and inspired; its "chief corner stone" is "Jesus Christ Himself." This is Christianity, historic and catholic, the "faith of our fathers," and our faith. No subsequent theological or philosophic construction must be allowed to deface or deform it, either by addition or by subtracton.

III

THE SOURCE AND THE STANDARD OF FAITH

Jesus Christ, the living Lord, is the object of saving faith; and He, as a Person, is its substance and its foundation. Therefore, in the highest sense, He is the source of faith wherever it is present and active; and He is the standard, by which the thought and life of individuals and of the Church are to be tested and determined. Jesus Christ, however, did not come into the world as an accident or an apparition. He came as the consummation of a redeeming work of God in the history of Israel, as Himself the divine agent of redemption, and as at once the Founder and the Life of the fellowship of believers. The record of that long divine process, which began in the dawn of Israel's history, and reached its climax in the formation of the Christian Church, is found in the Scriptures of the Old and

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New Testaments. They are unique as Christianity itself is unique; and they are indispensable and authoritative, in their account of how Christianity came to be, and of what Christianity is, as the guide and inspiration of faith and life. The United Church accordingly expresses its belief "in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the primary source and ultimate standard of Christian faith and life." Christianity is the religion of a Book, only because it is, in its very essence, the religion of a Person. The Scriptures derive their unity, their meaning, and their value, by and through the presence of Christ in them. They are precious to us, and they command our reverence and obedience, because we find Christ in them, Saviour and Lord, Way and Truth and Life, All in all; and because God speaks to us in them, and finds us through them, and by them leads us to Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.

IV

THE CONTINUITY OF FAITH

Christianity, from the day of Pentecost to this day, has been a continuous experience of God's saving work in Christ. Through this experience, the Christian Church came into being; and by this experience, it has continued to exist, through all the successive generations. There has been an evangelical succession throughout the ages, leading onward from the Apostles to our own day and

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generation. We are the heirs of that great spiritual heritage, to which our predecessors, in the knowledge of Christ, have made by their faith and life, continuous and increasing contribution.

It may, therefore, be fairly demanded of The United Church that it should definitely relate itself to that mighty past. Does it share the experience of the people of God in the ages past? Does it keep the faith, by which they lived, and in which they died? The same question may be put in another way: How is The United Church related to the Creeds, which the Church has drawn up from time to time, and which have been the means, whereby the Church has made plain to itself its faith in Christ, and has made confession of that faith before man? It would not be a fair answer to that question, for a modern church simply to repeat the language of the creeds, or even to adopt one of them as its own.

Such action would not be intelligent, and could scarcely be sincere. A church which claims to stand in the evangelical succession, must be loyal to that substance of the faith, which is the abiding essence of Christianity, and which found expression, age after age, in the great creeds of the universal church. This loyalty, moreover, must not be a mere lip service. The church must be prepared, when need arises, to give utterance to its faith, in the language and the forms of present-day experience and reflection, and to show that, in these, it has conserved all that is vital and per-

manent in the creeds of the past. To this twofold demand, The United Church responds in the document we are studying. In the preamble, the church claims to be true to the faith, of which the creeds are the storehouse and the defence. And in the articles, which follow, it claims to be conserving, and maintaining, the great verities, to which the creeds bear historic witness.

V

HISTORICAL REFERENCE

At this point, the teacher will probably desire to insert some historical reference to the creeds of Christendom. A full statement here is, of course, impossible. (A few of the leading works on the subject are named in the appendix to these pages.) The creeds, to which he will probably desire to refer are as follows.

(a) *Creeds of the Ancient Church.* These creeds were called forth mainly by views regarding the Person of Christ and His redemptive work, which believers felt to be subversive of the faith by which they lived. (1) *The Apostles' Creed.* For example: One such error cast doubts upon the historic nature of Christ's life on earth, and tended to make Him a mythical figure, like the so-called "Saviours" of the "mystery religions," which were numerous in the early centuries of our era, and were rivals of Christianity in its first appeal to the Gentile world. The Church recognized in this view of its Lord's

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Person, a serious challenge. If Christianity is resolved into a myth, it will vanish like a cloud. Accordingly the church met such mythological interpretations of its faith by statements of the Fact of Christ, in which the Christian Salvation is presented as an historic achievement, wrought by God in actual events and deeds. Such statements were expansions of the Baptismal Formula. Their brief phrases, and intense significance, made them most suitable for the instruction of candidates for Holy Baptism. They could also be set to music, and sung in the course of public worship; and they served admirably as witness to the world of the bed rock of truth, on which the Church stood fast. The most famous of these statements is that which we know as the "Apostles' Creed," which was modelled on one still older, and only received its final form in the Seventh Century. It stands foursquare against all attempts, allegorizing or idealizing, to set aside the historic nature of Christianity. It has retained its place throughout the ages, as the most ancient, and the best beloved, of all the symbols of the Church's loyalty to her Lord.

(2) *The Nicene Creed.* Another error in the early church sought to reduce the place and rank of the Redeemer to that of a second or subordinate God. To the modern mind this theory makes no appeal. But to the Greek of the third and fourth centuries, it was specious and attractive. Greek religious thought had come to conceive of God as separate from this world of space and time by an immeasur-

able gulf. It was much occupied, accordingly, with the problem of how this gulf was to be crossed, and connection established between God and the world. This was supposed to be accomplished by the existence of intermediate beings, crossing the void, as by a kind of gleaming bridge. Such imaginary beings are supposed to be immeasurably superior to man; but at the same time, they were immeasurably inferior to God, who exists in the infinite distance as the Sole Deity. This theory was "in the air" in these centuries; and its application to the Person of Christ was almost inevitable. Accordingly, we find Christ regarded, in the system known as Arianism, as a glorious and wonderful being, to whom the honorific titles, used in the Scriptures, may not improperly be applied. In this way, the demand of Greek thought, and the instincts of Christian feeling, might, it was hoped, be alike satisfied, and Christianity with ease and swiftness be established as the religion of the Empire.

The scheme seemed feasible; and, by a clever manipulation of texts, it might be made to appear as scriptural. It had, however, one damning defect. However high the rank attributed to Christ, it was still no more than that of a demi-God, a kind of being, whom polytheists could regard as divine, but whom monotheists could not worship as God. Those who were experiencing the Christian salvation could not regard its mediator as a *mere step toward God*. He must be in *the fullest sense one with God*. The Christian mind might not be able

to refute its opponents; but it was absolutely convinced that Christ and the Father are one, as the twofold source of the Salvation, in the possession of which the believing heart rejoiced. This conviction of faith found its voice in Athanasius, who declared, with deep insight, that in contending against Arianism, Christians were fighting for their all. To displace Christ from His equality with the Father, was to make the Christian salvation impossible, and to destroy Christianity as a religion.

This was the position taken in 325 A.D. by the famous council of Nicea, and stated with redundant emphasis in their famous creed. The key-word of that creed is the epithet "*Homoousios*," applied to Christ in His relation to the Father and usually rendered "the same in substance." Debate may be held as to the meaning of the Greek word *ousia* or the Latin word *substantia*. But there is no doubt whatever as to the significance, which believers in all ages have attached to it, and the value they have put upon it. They have used it to express their belief that Christ, the Redeemer, is as divine as the Father; that, in worshipping Him, they are not turning away from God, but are honoring the Father; and that their faith rests in the Father and the Son as one in essence and in power. The God of the Christian is not the Greek "Absolute," unknowable, unapproachable, with whom no communion is possible, but the heavenly Father, who was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, who is perfectly revealed in the Son, and who, with the

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Son makes His abode in the believing heart. So unphilosophical and unspeculative, so intensely practical and experiential, is the Nicene Creed, in its central affirmation. Therefore, the Christian Church in all its branches adheres to it; and in its apprehension of the Glory of the Redeemer, as Very God of Very God, The United Church humbly and loyally concurs.

(3) *The Creed of Chalcedon.* Logic is always easier than life. What is grasped in experience as a unity, is often separated by logic into irreconcilable elements. So it was, after the Nicene Creed had vindicated the true God-head of the Redeemer, that theologians found it hard, by any logical process, to reconcile with it His perfect humanity. The long, weary, embittered controversy cannot be traced here. In the end, at Chalcedon, in 451 A.D., the church declared the essential points of the Christian faith to be (a) The true Godhead of the Redeemer, (b) His perfect manhood, (c) the Unity of His Person. These are securely fixed in Scripture and in experience; and in them Christian thought finds its inexhaustible contents, and a horizon that is definite and yet boundless.

(4) *The Athanasian Creed.* This is the latest of the creeds of the ancient church. Athanasius was not its author, though its teaching develops His thought. It bears the stamp of Augustine's mind, though it belongs to a period long subsequent to him, probably early in the ninth century. It marks the end of the long struggle of the Christian mind to

repel the tendency, referred to above, to reduce the divinity of Christ to a grade lower than that of the Father, and that of the Spirit, by consequence, to a grade lower still; and it gives final utterance to the Christian faith that the great Agent in redemption is a being not less divine than the Father, and that the Spirit, as the operative power of God in Salvation, belongs in like manner to the same realm of Godhead. These Three—Father, Son and Spirit—are comprehended in what the believer means, when he takes on his lips the great name of God. They are, therefore, One, as they are the one only source of the Christian salvation. This is not a matter of speculation, but of revelation. It is thus God makes Himself known; and it is thus Christian experience apprehends Him, and the Christian soul enters into communion with him. The conception of God as tri-une is not a burden laid upon faith, by an alien metaphysic, but is a demand of faith, which will not suffer itself to be denied the sole security of its inheritance.

(b) The Evangelical Doctrines of the Reformation. The Reformation did not originate in a criticism of dogma. It was, essentially, a revival of religion. The Reformers did not repudiate the creeds of the ancient church. They were, in fact, strenuous defenders of the doctrines embodied in these creeds. They were, however, profoundly convinced that the Roman Church had failed to maintain and perpetuate the doctrines of grace, which are set forth in the New Testament, and

constitute the very essence of Christianity. Their criticism, accordingly, was directed mainly to the conditions, under which the Christian Salvation becomes the possession of believers.

In their opinion, the mediæval church had interposed a vast and elaborate machinery between the soul and God, so that the salvation which is God's free gift to faith becomes an uncertain boon, administered by the priesthood, and bestowed as climax of a long process of legal obedience. Briefly, the Reformers regarded the mediæval church as having fallen from the primitive and scriptural faith to the lower levels of legalism and ceremonialism. Their aim was to recall believers to the simplicity that is in Christ, and to proclaim to a sinful world that great salvation, which cost God the blood of His own Son, and which, in all its fulness, is offered, without money and without price, to the reception of humble faith. This conviction, they believed to have full scriptural authority; and this Gospel they saw exemplified in saved lives, and sealed in martyr deaths. Their beliefs and their blessed experiences, they embodied in creeds, and confessions and catechisms. The contents of these great sixteenth century documents are in substantial harmony with one another, whatever be the church or nation from which they emanate—German, or French, or Swiss, or English, or Scottish. They are *scriptural*, based on the actual teachings of the Bible. They are *catholic*, embodying and reaffirming the dogmas formulated in the creeds of the ancient

church. They are *evangelical*, proclaiming the freedom of the Gospel, and the priesthood of believers. They are *Protestant*, in that they repudiate the mediæval doctrine of the church as the institute of salvation, and of the priesthood as in any sense mediatorial.

In the seventeenth century, the churches of the Reformation became unhappily divided on many points both of doctrine and of polity. Men, who were wholly at one in their opposition to Rome, and in their hold of the saving truths of the Gospel, became estranged from one another, by holding divergent views on such topics as the decrees of God, the universality of the atonement, the nature and efficacy of Divine grace. The question of episcopacy, as opposed to presbytery, introduced further divisions, which were also tragically accentuated by political strife. The evangelical fellowship of the great age of the Reformation was broken. Lutheranism, Calvinism, Arminianism, became arrayed against one another, in ever-widening divergence, and ever-deepening hostility. Sects began to abound. Scholastic orthodoxy laid its deadening influence on living churches, and was followed by the twofold result of *pietism*, with its tendency to subjectivity and emotionalism, and *rationalism*, destroying the very roots of religion in the human soul. The intellectual warfare of the time produced many treatises of immense erudition and high systematic ability. Doctrinal standards also were framed, learned, devout, and sincere. But

the value of these documents belongs to the age that produced them. They take their place in the history of Christian doctrine. The modern mind cannot neglect their study, without imperilling its own advance in constructive thought. But they are unsuited to be expressions of the living faith of the Church. Their intellectual forms are not those, which are fitted for the confessional purpose of later generations of believers.

Our Basis of Union, accordingly, makes little direct use of them. It ascends from them to the "evangelical doctrines of the Reformation," which are held in common by the three uniting churches, and are contained in their standards. These doctrines are set forth in our Basis constructively. Controversial and polemical statements are carefully avoided.

Our church is confronting the men of this present day and generation. It sets aside controversies which have lost their significance, and formulæ which have been long disused. It desires, as being "put in trust with the Gospel," to declare, simply and clearly, the great central verities, which are contained in the Holy Scriptures, and have been tested in the evangelical experience of two thousand years.

CHAPTER II

ARTICLE I.—*Of God*.—We believe in the one only living and true God, a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in His being and perfections; the Lord Almighty, who is love, most just in all His ways, most glorious in holiness, unsearchable in wisdom, plenteous in mercy, full of compassion, and abundant in goodness and truth. We worship Him in the unity of the Godhead and the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, three persons of the same substance, equal in power and glory.

The very heart of a religion is to be found in its conception of God. A church, which is led to articulate its faith in a creed, is bound to set forth its conception of God in brief, but explicit terms; and to place its thought of God in the forefront of its doctrinal statement. The article—"of God"—is stated in one short sentence, in the Apostles' Creed—"I believe in God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth"; and nothing could excel the depth and comprehensiveness of this sublime affirmation of faith. Yet the wealth of Scripture teaching, the revelation of God in Christ, the inheritance of Christian experience, and the necessities of defence, all combine to make a fuller statement of the contents of faith desirable. Such a statement cannot, of course, assume the proportions of a systematic presentation the whole Christian doctrine of God. It must avoid topics which trench on precarious metaphysical discussion. It must confine itself to a brief presentation of that Christian Theism, which is the very citadel of our

faith. (A very noble statement of the central truths of Theism is to be found in Prof. W. P. Paterson's recent volume, "The Nature of Religion," pp. 366-368.) The elements in the theistic doctrine selected here for special reference are as follows: (1) The personality of God. There have been religions, which have denied personality to the supreme reality, e.g., Brahmanism. Some great philosophies have been constructed, which have set aside this idea of God, e.g., Spinozism. And, it may be, that devout persons have been able to nourish their souls, without directing their faith and hope to a personal God. It should be remembered, also, that personality is a term, which it is extremely difficult to define. In particular, it should be carefully distinguished from individuality. Christian faith is sure that the believer has communion with a living person, to whom he ascribes the characteristic qualities, which make up for him the essential being of those with whom he has daily intercourse; though these qualities exist in God, in forms and degrees infinitely beyond their manifestation in finite human persons. God, thus conceived, is, for Christians, the ultimate reality. Nothing can be set beside Him, or divide with Him the fear and love of men. Hence, the utterance of faith is clear and definite: "We believe in one only living and true God." He is "one only," not one of a class, but the One, who alone is what we have known Him to be, beside whom, as another than He, whether as His equal, or as subordinate to

Him, there can be none. This is Monotheism—the doctrine of One God, “living,” as distinct from the lifelessness of pantheism, “and true,” as distinct from the confused imaginations and phantasies of polytheism. From many a mission field, we hear that this monotheistic faith in a living God, who is the ultimate reality, and the supreme causality, in the universe, has come as an amazing and joyful revelation, to souls dissatisfied with the idea of an impersonal deity, or bewildered, and even terrified, by the mythical beings supposed to crowd the realm of the unseen. And, even in Western lands, where multitudes have been chilled by the coldness of a philosophy, which has lost touch with personality, or have been appalled by the scientific conception of a universe governed by physical forces only, Christian monotheism has still the value of a Gospel, and makes its appeal to all. who have felt, to the very core of their being, the ultimate problem of human life in the midst of this great and terrible world. (2) The Attributes of God: Those, who have been brought up on the Shorter Catechism, will remember the answer to the question—What is God? They will remember the list of qualities therein ascribed to God. This list is very greatly extended in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Plainly, such a list can never be complete. Two things are true regarding a Christian’s knowledge of God. First, It is real and reliable. We do know God through His self-revelation. We know Him, after the analogy of our knowledge

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of one another, but far more deeply and intimately. Second, it is limited in extent. The philosophy, known as Agnosticism, denies that we can know God *at all*. Christianity claims to know God, but disclaims a knowledge that could be regarded as intellectually complete. Faith is at once very bold, and very humble. It dares to say of God, "I know Him; because He has made Himself known to me in Christ, my Saviour. I know whom I have believed." But in attempting to describe God, it cultivates a reverential reserve, and is scrupulously non-speculative and non-theoretical. Such knowledge, and such reserve are exemplified in the article under consideration. The list given of the Divine attributes may be thus divided: (a) Attributes, which belong to the existence of God, His mode of being, and His manifold perfections. Such are: *Spirituality*, in which He is distinguished from all material existences; *Infinitude*, in which He is viewed as existing apart from space and all spatial limitations; *Eternity*, in which he is apprehended as above time, and beyond all time measurements; *Unchangeableness*, in which He is contemplated as out of reach of those "chances and changes," which are inevitable in all human existence; *Supremacy* and *Omnipotence* in which Christian faith adores Him as "Lord" of the whole universe, having at His disposal all possible power, "almighty," unhindered by any defeat, undefeated by any obstacle in pursuance of His glorious purpose. The Christian Gospel is concerned to declare to all whom it

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summons to the task of Christian living, that the God, whom we serve, is no limited, imperfect being, not sure of Himself or His resources, but One who is accessible, available, omnipotent, sovereign and supreme. (b) Attributes, which belong to, and indeed constitute, the character of God. That God is a moral being, that He realizes in Himself perfectly, the ethical qualities, which are seen only imperfectly in the best of men, is the conception of God, which Christianity has inherited from the religion of the Old Testament. This view of God is set forth with the completeness, which only inspiration could effect, in the New Testament. The church of Christ is pledged to maintain and to verify, in word and deed, this truth of the character of God. It is the tragedy of church history that exponents of the Christian faith have professed to believe, and have certainly taught, things about God, which, if they had been said of any good man, would have been vilely slanderous. No duty could be more incumbent on the modern church than to Christianize its conception of God. Christ Himself is the touchstone.

It is impossible, in describing the character of a good man, to give a true impression of him, by making a list of his outstanding qualities. No such list can ever be complete. No picture, constructed from it, can ever be living or life-like. Much more is this true of God. We know Him in Christ. If we note certain of His ethical attributes, it is to magnify our thought of Him, and to quicken

our love and wonder as we approach Him, but never to allow it to be supposed that these constitute a full account of His Glory. The qualities mentioned in this article are those, which are indispensable elements in an adoring estimate of the character of Him whom we know in Christ. (1) Love: Love is more than an attribute of God. It is the very essence of His ethical personality. The mystery of godliness is very great; but this is the secret, "God is Love." The problems of providence often sorely try our faith; but the key is here—an experimental, not an intellectual, solution, God is Love. Every proposition, that claims a place within the round of Christian doctrine, must be brought to the test of this ultimate verity, God is Love. In the love of God, manifest in all His dealings, but supremely in Christ, the Christian salvation finds its source and warrant, and the Christian ethic its standard, its inspiration and its dynamic. No philosophy can explain the Divine love, no theology prescribe its limits. No theory can penetrate its meaning. No rhetoric dare embellish its value. It transcends the searchings of science. "*Sed quid invenientibus?*" None can know, save they who have in faith received the great love which pours from the heart of God, and is, in experience, immediate and personal, free and triumphant. Men have sought to understand God, by analogies drawn from palaces, and armies, court-rooms, and banking-houses. In vain! Such figures sometimes help; they more often mislead. God is love; and to

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gain some conception of what He is, we must follow the clue which love affords, as it appears in human relationships—love, self-revealing, self-communicating, self-sacrificing, love that gives all and stints nothing, love that never lets go, unquenched by sorrow, undefeated by the grave. Such a love-lit quest will lead us through the sweetest, tenderest, most tragic, and most glorious of human experiences. It will lead us to a cross-crowned hill; and then it will lift us to the throne of omnipotence, and will declare to us its foundation and its glory—Love, “infinite, eternal, and unchangeable.” Not pain, not grief, not fate, nor chance, nor sin, is the ultimate fact, the final explanation of the universe, but the “one only living and true God,” and “God is love.” This is the everlasting gospel. This is the Gospel for the twentieth century; and no century, of all that have rolled on since Christ was born, needed it more. War-devastated, distracted by animosities, misled by statesmen, disillusioned as to democracy, rendered desperate by failure of schemes and plans, treaties and conventions, alliances and leagues, the world needs that God, who is indeed past finding out, and yet is known to the core of His being, who is Love. (2) Following upon love, three attributes are mentioned, which are inseparable from love in our thought of God, namely, justice, holiness, wisdom. Without these, as elements in its nature, love could not be true love. An unjust, or unholy, love is unthinkable. He who is Love, must be “most just

in all His ways," "most glorious in holiness." When love acts, it must operate in full accord with the highest laws and forces and values of the moral order, and as their fulfilment and satisfaction. When justice determines action, it must do so, not in a merely legal manner, but in the spirit of love, seeking the highest welfare of those, amid whom, and on whose behalf, it operates. Gordon's famous phrase, as he entered on his duties in the Sudan, "Keep the balance level"—did not fully express the justice which he himself so nobly administered. The popular contrast, between justice and generosity, is ill-conceived. St. Paul's contrast, between the righteous man and the good man, certainly does not imply that any man could really be righteous who was not good, or good who was not righteous. In like manner, love cannot tamper with holiness. Love requires holiness both in the lover and the beloved. Holiness is their mutual interest. Sin puts a strain on love, and this may deepen to the intensest suffering, which love will endure, but will never seek to evade. God is love, holy love. Therefore, there is a Cross in the heart of God. This is the mystery of God's redeeming action. The same harmony is to be observed between love and wisdom. An unwise love would only work woe; and has often done so in the relationships of earth, even among those who have loved one another. An unloving wisdom might issue in schemes of superlative cleverness; but these in the end would be followed by disillusionment and despair. In God,

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love and wisdom are one; and both are unfathomable by any plummet of the human understanding, while each is verified in the progressive experience of the race and the individual. (3) Then come certain attributes, which set forth the attitude and activity of love toward its objects. First, *Mercy*, which is love, seeking the lost and sinful, laboring for their redemption, removing their guilt and shame, restoring them to a forfeited place, and causing them to shine in a lustre, which can radiate only from the forgiven. Second, *Compassion*, which is love, pouring itself out upon all the needy children of man. Here, take in a Bible reading upon the compassion of Jesus. Compare the passages which describe it with passages in the Old Testament which anticipate that gracious fulfilment. Then say—"This is the Christian conception of God." He is love, "full of compassion." Third, *Goodness*, which is love, lavishing itself on all the creatures of God, laboring to bring them to the highest perfection of which their nature is capable; neglecting not the lowliest—subangelic, subhuman; withholding no gift that is needed to attain the design of a wise and holy love. Such abundant goodness constitutes love's highest appeal for the response of love. How blind, how guilty they who harden themselves, and know not that the goodness of God leadeth them to repentance! Fourth, finally, one attribute closes the list, without which all the others would be ineffective and indeed meaningless, namely, *truth*, that is faithfulness. Suppose God had all these

qualities, but was unreliable in their manifestation. Suppose, He were arbitrary, capricious, not to be reckoned on. Suppose He made a covenant that was not "sure," but was a mere temporary arrangement, lightly entered on and lightly broken. Suppose God could not be trusted in His promises. Suppose His love could not be relied on utterly and for ever. What then? Then He would not be God, but an oriental Despot, whom men might slavishly fear, whom they would never reverence, nor trust, nor love. Fitly, therefore, does the list of the moral attributes of God close in this note. The God of Christian faith is true. He keeps His covenant. His word is sure. He changes not.

(3) The Tri-Unity of God. The unity of God does not mean the unit of arithmetic, or the ultimate "atom" of science. His personality does not mean that He is, psychologically and ethically, a mere individual, incapable of vital relations with any other than Himself, and having no inward life save that of a bare self-identity. It is not thus we conceive the highest human personality. Still less, by such forms of thought, can we do justice to the fulness of life, which is realized within the Godhead. God is one. There is none other than He. There is none like Him. But He lives within Himself a full life, a life of relationships, a life of fellowship.

The Christian conception of God is absolutely removed from Deism, or Unitarianism, on the one hand, and Tritheism on the other. The One God, whom we worship, exists in a threefold fellowship;

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and is the threefold causality, to which we in experience trace our salvation. Let it be well understood that the conception of God as One and Three did not originate as a philosophical speculation, nor was it an irreverent attempt to enter into the secret of the Divine nature. Christianity arose among Jewish monotheists, who did not abandon monotheism, when they gave their allegiance to Jesus, and confessed Him to be Lord. But their religious experience was essentially trinitarian; and, as their reflective power developed, as their study of Scripture deepened, as the battle for the Christian faith grew keener, their doctrine of God became richer, and, after four centuries of controversy, assumed the trinitarian form, which is common to every branch of the Evangelical Christian Church. The United Church puts itself on record as holding the doctrine of the Trinity, worshipping God "in the unity of the Godhead, and the mystery of the Holy Trinity," and definitely repudiating the heresies which assailed the Christian faith in the early centuries, such as Arianism and Sabellianism together with their modern counterparts. In this article, accordingly, we are retracing the steps taken by the early Church, namely, first, an experience, and then a doctrine. *First*, an experience: Christians know themselves to be indebted for their salvation to the indwelling Spirit, the living Lord, the heavenly Father; and these Three are One, as the threefold cause of every good that God's human creatures can possess. These Three do not con-

stitute a series, one or other member of which might be dropped, without affecting seriously the Christian salvation. Each implies the other Two. Each, when apprehended by faith, introduces to, and gives fellowship with, the others. The Godhead is not partitioned among the Three. In directing his faith to each, the believer is confronted by, and is dealing directly with, a being who is God; and the Three, in their inner relations, constitute the Godhead, the only God, who can do for sinful men, what they need for a full salvation. Ask an experienced believer—"Could you do without the Spirit of God?"—he will answer, "No!" "Could you do without the Heavenly Father, to whom we have access through Christ, by one Spirit" (Ephes. 2: 18)—he will answer "No!" Ask him further—"How then are these Three related to one another?" He will reply, "I know that in Christ I am a child of God; and that the Father, whom Jesus revealed, is my Father. I know that Jesus, the Son of the Father, is my Redeemer and Lord. I know that the Spirit of God is the source of all spiritual good in me. And I know that in 'God' are included 'the Father,' 'the Son,' and 'the Spirit.' But how these Three are One, I do not know. The inner nature of the Godhead is not for human understanding to comprehend. Yet this I know, that these Three are the One God—Father, Son and Spirit—from whom comes my salvation, in whom is all my hope." *Second*, a *doctrine*, in which the blessed experience, thus indicated, is stored. So that successive genera-

tions of believers may be comforted and edified. Once more, note carefully that there is nothing intellectually arrogant, or spiritually presumptuous in the doctrine of the Trinity. It keeps close to Scripture and experience; and, if it use words which are not Scriptural, it does so, that it may rule out ideas, which are not relevant to experience, and not congruous with truth, as truth is in Jesus. Words not used in Scripture are "person" and "substance." These Greek terms, and their Latin equivalents, are borrowed from philosophy; and it may be questioned whether, as translated into English, and as commonly employed in English colloquial speech, they really help us to interpret the facts of Christian experience. When we speak of three "persons," we are apt to think of three independent and separate individuals; and, in that case, the doctrine of the unity of God conflicts with the idea of a Trinity. To use such words, in such a sense, is to render the Christian helpless, before the Moslem and other Unitarians. God is not three in the sense in which He is One. He is One, and within His unity there are relationships, which we may distinguish, but can never separate. This distinction, without separateness, is what we mean by "person." So also, when we speak of "substance" we are apt to think of a thing spread out in space, and this materialistic image is wholly inconsistent with the spirituality of God. What we seek to express by the Homousian, i.e., the "being of the same substance," is simply that the Redeemer

is as Divine as the Father, and the Spirit as Divine as each of these, and that these Three constitute the very being of Him, whom we designate "God."

It may seem pedantic to insist on the consubstantiality and equality which exists between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In reality, it is profoundly important. If God be conceived as a bare unit, the Redeemer and the Spirit being conceived as outside of God, we are back to the "subordinationism," which haunted Greek theology, and produced the Arian heresy. Not only so, but we enter on a road, which ends in denying anything more than an honorary "divinity" to Christ. On the mission field, too, we are defeated before a rigorous Islam. If God be one, and is incapable of distinctions *within* His unity, the Mohammedan is perfectly justified in maintaining that the Deity, thus conceived, could not give rise to a Son, without introducing ideas of the Divine nature and action, which are unthinkable. The distinctions are *within* the Godhead, and each possesses the eternity of the Divine essence. One is the Father, the ground and source of all being and all good. One is the Son, who is the eternal manifestation of the Father's glory and the eternal object of the Father's love. One is the Spirit, who is the living bond between the Father and the Son, and is the eternal energy of God in His creative and redemptive work. God—Father, Son, Spirit. This is the God of Revelation and Redemption. God is inscrutable; but He is not unknowable. This is He, whom we

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know as Father, Son, and Spirit. The Christian doctrine of God leads us into mystery, but not a blank mystery. As we know Him in His self-revelation and self-communication, such He is in Himself, and His changeless reality.

CHAPTER III

ARTICLE II.—*Of Revelation.*—We believe that God has revealed Himself in nature, in history, and in the heart of man; that He has been graciously pleased to make clearer revelation of Himself to men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; and that in the fulness of time He has perfectly revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. We receive the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, given by inspiration of God, as containing the only infallible rule of faith and life, a faithful record of God's gracious revelations, and as the sure witness to Christ.

The God, whom we know in Christ, is essentially self-revealing. It is worth while to remind ourselves that "revelation" in this connection does not mean the announcement of propositions regarding the Divine nature. God is a living Person. He desires to be known and loved by those whom He made, and seeks to have as His children. It is *Himself*, whom He reveals, leading men to a knowledge of His character, His redeeming purpose, the wealth He seeks to communicate to those who receive Him in humble hearts. Let us get away from intellectualism. All here is personal and ethical. Above all let us cease to imagine that we can discover God, or to conceive that knowledge of God is the result of our mental processes. In the relation of these two persons—God and man—it is God who takes the initiative, approaching the soul in its need of Him, and revealing Himself as the answer which man's endeavor can never provide. The question

is not the philosophical one—"Is God knowable?" It is rather the practical one—How does He make Himself known? By what avenues does He approach the soul, seeking to occupy the human heart in fulness of love and truth?

This article directs attention to five spheres and organs of God's revelation of Himself—we might rather say, five unveilings of the mind and character of God, as He permits His human children, to behold Him, more and more clearly. (1) We behold Him in Nature. It is true that Nature discloses only some aspects of the Divine glory. The man of science, the poet, the artist, have it as their great office, to enable us to see and appreciate something of the power, wisdom, goodness, beauty and sublimity, which nature discloses; so that we can sing the Nineteenth Psalm with sincere adoration. Yet Nature's witness is inarticulate and incomplete. What Scripture calls "the hiding of His Power" (Hab. 3: 4) sends us beyond Nature, to learn more of Him, who has not yet fully declared Himself. (2) We trace His governance in history. There is, what Dr. Shailer Matthews calls a "spiritual interpretation of history." Amid the surge of passion, and the waywardness of self-will, and the prevalence of what we must call contingency, admitting, too, the responsibility of man, and the place of human agency, history testifies to a Divine providence, which, in the wide arena where nations and races work out their destinies, maintains the moral order of the world and certifies the Sovereignty

of the "Eternal, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness." Yet even History's solemn judgments do not utter the whole mind of God, nor does the human mind always comprehend its verdicts. (3) More intimately and more definitely God reveals Himself in the heart of man. In the secret place of personality, where man knows himself, there is audible to his inward ear a still small voice, which speaks to him with Divine authority. It declares to him the preciousness of the higher values, approves when he seeks them, condemns when he forsakes them, and rewards the endeavor after them with increased moral sensitiveness and moral power. To this inward revelation, the New Testament missionaries made frank and confident appeal, and laid upon men the responsibility of being true to the light within, which will, if followed, lead them to a more perfect radiance. The winner of souls cannot carry the Gospel to any human heart, without finding that God has been there before him. (4) Such methods of revelation as have been mentioned are universal, and make their appeal to all mankind. But there is a method, which proceeds, through the choice of human agents, whom God may employ to convey His word to their fellow men. Such "men of God" He prepares for their task by a dealing of His Holy Spirit, which so enlightens and quickens them, that their message comes to their hearers as none other than the Word of God. We need not deny to the ethnic faiths the possession of men who belong to this class; and in the great literatures of

the nations we may read moral and religious truth, which can have had no other Source than God's self-communications. But Christianity has a direct spiritual ancestry in the prophets, who were the interpreters of God to the people of Israel. It will scarcely be doubted by sympathetic readers, that their endowment was unique; that in the exercise of their vocation they were filled with the Spirit; and that their recorded utterances are the product of the inspiration of the Spirit of truth, holiness, and love. (5) When we read the history of Israel and give heed to the interpretation of that history by prophetic voices, we are thrilled with the sense of a great Divine movement. God is here. He is at work. His purpose is coming even more fully into view, and is approaching even more nearly its wondrous consummation. At length, "the fulness of time" arrived, and He came—the Man Christ Jesus—and in Him, expectant and surrendered souls of all the ages and of every race and clime have recognized the perfect revelation of God. The United Church joins with the Holy Church throughout all the world in acknowledging Jesus Christ to be "the Word of God made flesh," the very utterance of God's redeeming love made in and to mankind, without any reserve or uncertainty, being in very deed "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person." We do not know all of the Divine ways and acts. But we do know Him in Christ, and He can never be

other than the God who must *be like*, and must needs *be*, Jesus Christ.

The article on God's self-revelation would not have been complete without a deliverance on the sacred Scriptures of the Christian faith. The following points are to be noted: (a) The writings received as Scripture, namely, the Old and New Testaments. Other writings there are, which other Churches have placed, almost, if not quite, on a level with the Old and New Testaments. Some of these are, undoubtedly, in a high degree interesting and valuable. It was a text from one of them that comforted John Bunyan in the crisis of his religious experience. (See *Grace Abounding*.) But the sure instinct of Christian piety has received the Old and New Testaments as unique in function, in quality, and in authority. (b) Their Divine origin. They are "given by inspiration of God." The fundamentalist schism had scarcely begun to devastate the Churches, when these words were penned. Yet the phrase itself covers the matter under discussion, and it is to be noted that it is drawn from the Westminster Confession of Faith, which reads thus: "Under the Name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God Written, are now contained all the Books of the Old and New Testaments. (Here follows list of Canonical Books.) All of which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith." It is to be observed that the authors of the Westminster Confession are content to state the fact of inspiration, and the purpose served by it, without entering

into any theory of inspiration; and The United Church wisely observes the same reserve. The Scriptures are inspired of God, to convey His will to men for their salvation; and as such, and for this purpose, they are His living Word, the Gospel of grace, the revelation of the promise, "which as it is repeated and made more clear from time to time; so was it embraced with joy, and most constantly received of all the faithful" (from the Scots Confession of 1560). "It is the sum of God's commands, threatenings, and promises, addressed to our faith and above all the Gospel offer of Christ to us. This Word of God need not take the form of direct exhortation; it may be recognized in the simple histories of men or of nations recorded in the Scriptural" (from Dr. Lindsay's *History of the Reformation*, Vol. I, p. 463). Nothing else, nothing less, than this, is the point at issue, when we ask whether the Scriptures are the Word of God. The affirmative answer is given by believers of every age, and is given definitely and decisively here. (c) Their contents: thus given by inspiration, and forming the Word of God written, the Scriptures serve a threefold purpose: (1) They instruct our faith, and guide our life. (2) They record the process of the Divine revelations, as God gradually made known His saving purpose, and carried it to its consummation in the gift of His Son. (3) They bear witness to Christ, who is the promise of the Old Testament, whose Person and work form the theme of the New Testament. These functions the quality of

inspiration enables them to fulfil, in their own right, independent of any human supplement. As providing the rule which faith and life require, they are "infallible." As presenting the record of God's gracious revelations, they are "faithful." As the witness to Christ and His glory as Redeemer, they are "sure." The testimony of believers in all ages is a perfect consensus. The Scriptures are given by inspiration of God; they are addressed to all who confess their inability to find God by searching; and, for the purpose of revealing, and conveying, the great salvation, they are indispensable, trustworthy, and sufficient.

CHAPTER IV

ARTICLE III.—*Of the Divine Purpose.*—We believe that the eternal, wise, holy and loving purpose of God so embraces all events that while the freedom of man is not taken away, nor is God the author of sin, yet in His providence He makes all things work together in the fulfilment of His sovereign design and the manifestation of His glory.

1. Its Nature. Older documents spoke of the "decree" of God, or His *decrees*, or even of a *double decree*; and, as explained in the theology of the day, the word *decree* was intelligible, and not inappropriate. But to modern ears, this word suggests something overbearing, imperious, and even arbitrary; and its association with the Divine activity is apt to give rise to unscriptural conceptions of God. Our document prefers the term *purpose*. In doing so, it has in view that conception of the universe, which sees in it no more than the operation of natural law, and of forces working blindly. It confronts this conception, with the Christian doctrine of God as a Person, who has a moral character, and proposes to Himself an end, toward which He unweariedly works. He is not a sultan seated on a remote throne, issuing decrees. He is a Person, who comes near to us, whom we know in Christ, whose mind and will we discern in all the revelations which culminate in Him, who is supremely the Logos, the Reason and the Word of God. Taking its stand at the Cross of Christ where love triumphed

in dying, and surveying thence the vast field, both of nature and of human history, as well as the narrower sphere of individual experience, Christian faith discerns the operation of one all-comprehensive purpose, one all-embracing mind, one supreme will, working amid the infinite complexity of phenomena toward one "far-off Divine event." God has not constructed what has been called a "block" universe. He has brought into being a world of life, and movement; and in it He Himself is at work. The purpose of God is being fulfilled. Blind fate, mindless chance, have no place in the realm we inhabit. From their ruthless sway, and the fears they instil, the Christian believer is forever emancipated. Students of the expansion of Christianity in the early centuries, or in non-Christian lands to-day, know how immense is the relief, when the thought of Divine ruling, and overruling purpose enters and irradiates the mind.

2. Its Aim: The end which God proposes to Himself is described here as the "manifestation of His glory." "Glory" is to be understood as the fulness of the Divine attributes, and specially refers to that, which is the summation of them all, namely, love. Nothing glorifies God which infringes on His love. His "sovereign design" is the triumph of His love. This purpose of love, accordingly, possesses the qualities of Him who is love. Three epithets are here applied to it. (a) It is *eternal*. God's purpose is coeval with Himself. It was not suggested to Him, nor did it occur to Him in view of

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unforeseen contingencies. It is not an afterthought. In speaking of that which is above time, all human speech is faulty. If we say that God's purpose antedates creation, and governs providence, we are not submitting God to our time-measurements. Faith is satisfied with any language, if it can only confess the priority and invincibility of God's purpose, which we know in Christ to be redeeming love. It would be well, if theology would exercise the same discretion, and read the record both of creation and of providence, from the point of view of redemption. (b) It is *wise*. The wisdom of God is more than foreknowledge, a term which is entangled in time measures. We may perhaps conceive it more adequately, if we compare it to insight, a knowledge, which goes to the heart of what is, to us, a vast and bewildering mass of unrelated phenomena, and sees in them the conditions, in and through which the Divine will is moving to its predetermined end. Faith is sure that there can be nothing in the field of God's action, which is irrelevant to His design. Before the most baffling situations Christian faith proclaims the victory of the Divine purpose. (c) It is *holy*. The universe ultimately depends on moral values. If they do not enter into the purpose of God, if their conservation is not His primary aim, if He were to tolerate any evil, or make any compromise with it, the universe would be uninhabitable, and history would have broken down ere its course had begun. The deepest scepticism is not intellectual but moral.

and the answer to it is not an argument, but an experience. We know the Father as He is revealed in Jesus Christ, and His holy Father-love is all our confidence. This is no easy faith; but upon it depends an optimism, without which human life would be intolerable.

3. The Ultimate Problem. As soon as the Christian believer tries to bring his thoughts together, he is confronted by two facts of faith, neither of which can be relinquished. The one is the sovereignty of God; the other is human freedom. How to reconcile these two, how to explain their relations, to show how man can be free in a world governed by the will of an almighty God, and how God can be sovereign in a world, where the course of events is, in a thousand ways, determined by the free action of human beings: this constitutes a problem, not less for philosophy than for theology. One thing is certain, that no solution can be reached by selecting one element in the antinomy, and so emphasizing it as to exclude the other. Yet too often has this been done. One type of theology magnifies the sovereignty of God, till human freedom dwindles to extinction, and responsibility disappears. Another glorifies human freedom, till sovereignty drops from God's nerveless fingers, and He is reduced to the rôle of spectator of a drama, whose course is beyond His control, and whose *dénouement* He may have foreseen, but could not avoid. On such lines, debate is meaningless and fruitless, and is besides profoundly irreligious.

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In any case, the Christian Church cannot take sides in such a debate. Scripture affirms both the facts whose relationship forms the problem. Christian experience knows and grasps them both. No creed, that claims to be Scriptural and experimental, can do other than confess both. (a) God cannot violate the integrity of human nature. He has created *persons*, not *automata*. Their actions are their own. Responsibility cleaves to them, and cannot be renounced by them. Their sins are their own, and are not chargeable upon God as the author of them. (b) God cannot surrender the reins of government, even to the most exalted of His creatures. In that mystery, unfathomable by any logical formula, of the relation of the infinite to the finite, the eternal to the temporal, God is able to take the free actions of men, even their sins, and weave them into the texture of that purpose of love to whose fulfilment His faithfulness is pledged. Reason *requires*, but cannot by process of the mere understanding *reach*, this position, which is provided and secured only in the revelation of God in Christ. It is a position, which an idealism, like that of the late Sir Henry Jones, states and defends (see his great work, "A Faith that Enquires"). The enquiry, however, would be baffled by the appalling and intractable facts of the universe, had not God in Christ vindicated the supremacy of redeeming love. It is a position, accordingly, which can be held only in a living faith; and by such a faith it ought to be proclaimed above and beyond

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controversial statements, which, in the nature of the case, must be one-sided, and inadequate to the fulness of the truth. The non-controversial statement of Article III moves in the region of faith; and serves the purpose of faith better than the most brilliant dialectic.

CHAPTER V

ARTICLE IV.—*Of Creation and Providence.*—We believe that God is the creator, upholder and governor of all things; that He is above all His works and in them all; and that He made man in His own image, meet for fellowship with Him, free and able to choose between good and evil, and responsible to his Maker and Lord.

The theme of this article opens out toward an area of thought, which Philosophy and Science claim as their own. Much has been written of the relation of Christian faith to these two great enterprises of human intellect. The following conclusions seem to be of importance for religion and theology: (a) Faith is not subject to the dictates of either philosophy or science, and is not to be intimidated by them, as though it had to ask permission from them, before making its affirmations. Faith has a knowledge of God and of His redeeming work, as immediate and convincing as philosophy and science have of the objects with which they deal. (b) Faith has no quarrel with philosophy and science, as efforts to discover, and to interpret, the vast complexity of the universe, which constitutes man's environment, and provides him with the conditions of self-realization. Theology cannot afford to despise or ignore the action of that intellectual power with which man has been endowed, which was certainly meant to be employed to the fullest reach of its capacity, in accordance with its own inherent laws and conditions.

(c) Theology must not be identified with one type of philosophical or scientific opinion. Periods in the history of the Church have occurred, when this was done, with disastrous results. Faith has been made difficult, when it has been presented in the garb of a metaphysic long abandoned, and entangled in controversies long extinct. Theology must walk at liberty, freed from the chains of formulæ, which contemporary and transitional thought seeks to bind upon it. (d) Christian faith, however, has a right to its own conception of the world as a whole, and its own interpretation of its religious significance. (See Dr. Orr's well-known volume, "The Christian View of God and the World.") The claim of faith is that its knowledge of God in Christ carries with it a light, which shines upon the whole world, and lets believers see what it means in relation to God. In this religious estimate of the world, the following points are to be noted: (1) The dependence of the world upon God, for its origin, maintenance and governance. First: the origin of the world—God the Creator. What God's *method* of creation has been is not determined for us by the inspired Word of God. A reverent science will lift a little way the veil that hangs over the beginnings and the development of the wonders presented to our enquiring gaze. But the affirmation of faith is independent of such discoveries or hypotheses. God is not confronted by the world as an independent existence. He is the source of all that has being. "In the beginning, God": is true of the universe as it exists in space

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and time, and all existent things have the ground of their being in God. The creative act, implying, as it does, transition from the eternal to the temporal, is, indeed, inconceivable by human intelligence. But, that the God, whom we know as Love, should have the impulse to create, i.e., to bring into being a world, in and to which He could reveal Himself, is not inconceivable, but is wholly congruous with our deepest thought of Him, as He pours upon us in Christ the utmost treasures of His grace. Even Plato traced creation to love. And where Divine love operates, it will not lack resources of power and wisdom. Religion may seem to have little interest in cosmology; but the conviction that the world is God's work, that all that exists is created by Him, and has no meaning or value, or place in the realm of being, apart from Him, is essential to Christian theism. Only through such a conviction is it possible to bear the pressure of an environment which so far exceeds our puny power of reaction towards it. It is God's world; otherwise, life would be despair. Creation underlies Redemption. Redemption has cosmic value. The Divine Worker is seen in both these manifestations of His power and glory. The modern co-operative task of theology and science, in their harmonious action, is to work out "a Christian conception of the cosmos," which shall "link Creation, Providence, and Redemption into one whole of thought of which Christ is the centre. (See Dr. Oswald Dykes' "Divine Worker in Creation and Providence,"

ch. 11 specially, pp. 30-38.) *Second*, the maintenance of the world; God the Upholder. As the existence of the world is due "in the beginning" to the act of God, so is its continued existence due to His continued creative action. The idea that God created the world, and then left it to its own resources, to "spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change," belongs, perhaps, to eighteenth century rationalism, but is profoundly anti-Christian, and is, besides, hopelessly out of date. Creative action is not over and done with. God has not withdrawn from His world. The upholding of it, says Dr. Dykes, is at the same time the creation of it stage by stage. If we count the continued existence of the world by millenniums, instead of centuries, and if we discern in these vast periods, the successive uprisal of ever more complex and wonderful forms of being, this is not to lessen, but mightily to enhance, our worship of the Divine power, which has been so marvellously at work in Nature, through all the immeasurable history. *Third*, the governance of the world: God the Governor. The marvel of the world is not merely that it owes its origin and maintenance to God, but that it displays a direction, a movement to a goal, in a word a purpose, which is none other than that will of love, whose supreme expression is the Person and Work of Christ. God does not act spasmodically. We cannot ascend to a time when His purpose was as yet unformed. We cannot descend to some particular instance of His creative work, which is irrelevant to

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His great design. Creation, Providence, and Redemption reveal one master mind, one controlling and ordering will, one ruling motive, which will not be denied the issue of the infinite power and the infinite sacrifice of God. This conception of the dependence of the world upon God implies, further, that God stands in a twofold relation to the world, expressed technically in the terms transcendence and immanence. *Transcendence*—God is above all His works, as purpose and power and love and wisdom, are superior in quality of being, and degree of reality, and scale of value, to the created objects in which they are displayed and through which they reach fulfilment. *Immanence*—God is in all His works. The most reverent thought here is the simplest. What is that which is present in all the creatures of God's hand, sustaining them, giving them form and meaning, developing each to the perfection of which it is capable and binding all into the unity of an ordered whole? The answer is God Himself. God indwelling, inworking and outworking, till He gain His end. The universe is to be conceived, not after the analogy of a machine, but of a flower. It is not dead. It is alive; and its life is God. The work of God in creation reaches its climax, as far as Scripture and experience show, in the appearance of man on the earth. The Christian conception of human nature is involved in many problems, and is called upon to defend itself against many adversaries. A creed cannot enter into the discussions, which are the proper task of Apologetic.

It is called upon, however, to state definitely the positions, which cannot be surrendered, without letting go vital interests of the faith. Our article contains the following aspects of human nature, which are presupposed in the preaching of the Gospel, and in the experience of the Christian salvation. (1) Man has been created by God. By the direct intention, and by the operative energy of Him whom we know as Love, man came into being, and has been sustained throughout all the ages of God's unfolding purpose. It is worthy of note that this article says nothing of the method of creation. God is a worker who hideth Himself. We see part only of His ways. Faith is not concerned with details of biological science. But it is concerned to maintain that man, whatever science may have to say of the process by which he came into being, is the direct product of the love and power of God. All the forces resident in nature, apart from the indwelling Spirit of God, were not competent to produce, and they are utterly unable to explain, such a being as man, so wonderful in nature, so marvellously led, and hastening even now to a goal hid amid the dimness of years to come. In a materialistic age, the Church cannot lower its testimony to the dignity of man, linked as he is by indissoluble bonds to God, His Creator, Father and Lord. (2) Man was made in the Divine image. In seeking to know what human nature is, Christian faith does not explain the higher by the lower, and declares man to be a compound of ape and tiger, or

other noxious animals. Man stands at the head of the series of created beings, as we know them. In him the creative purpose has been manifested. This is what God desired—a being who should not be alien from Himself, incapable of knowing Him, or rendering Him effective and willing service. This is what is meant by “the image of God,” in which man is made. It involves all the elements of nature, requisite to make possible God’s personal self-communication to man, and man’s intelligent response to God. It will include what God shows Himself to possess in His Self-revelation, different only by the fact that man is the creation of God, and dependent in Him for life and good and all things. The Image of God in man, accordingly, will imply (a) intellectual powers, by which man is able to form a rational conception of the environment in which he lives; (b) moral powers, by which he is able to discern and appreciate the values, for which and by which, he must live, if his life is to be worthy and great; (c) spiritual power, which in the New Testament is designated faith, “assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.” These powers, it is to be noted, are not to be isolated from one another. They are functions of the man himself, as he reacts toward all things and persons, as they enter into the field of his life. When they all function in harmony, when faith in God is dominant in all the spheres and departments of life, then, and then only, is the image of God depicted truly in man, and man becomes what His Creator

designed him to be, and reaches the fulness of his own complex nature. (3) Man is meet for fellowship with God. What has just been stated is comment on "meet for." As made in the Divine image man is capable of fellowship with God, of knowing Him, receiving communications from Him, responding to His appeals and warnings, loving Him, obeying Him, intelligently appreciating His purposes and becoming their agent and instrument. Now we add, that what man is "meet for," he is "meant for." Fellowship with God is His destined goal, his exalted privilege, his bounden duty.

We must give to "fellowship" here its full significance. It is a personal relationship of beings who are akin in nature. In this relationship, each is for the other, each is pledged to the other; each exchanges with the other that which is deepest and richest in Him. There is nothing greater in God than love; and that He has given in Christ sacrificially for man and "with Him freely all things." There is nothing greater in man than faith, and in that act he gives himself to the God who comes to Him in Christ, "unreservedly, unconditionally, and for ever." In very deed God and man in this fellowship are no longer two but one. There has been mutual self-communication, self-impartment. It is in this connection, and in this only, that the conception of immortality takes on a Christian sense, and stirs a Christian's heart with hope. This fellowship cannot be dissolved by so slight an incident as death. Nay, death becomes, not a fate,

but an opportunity; not disaster, but triumph; not impoverishment, but means of incomparable enrichment. To die is gain. Death ranks among the "all things" which are ours, because we are Christ's. (4) Man is free and responsible. The relation between the infinite and the finite constitutes a problem for which, in the nature of the case, there can be no solution by the intellect of man. The finite would need to be infinite, before such a solution could be reached. The human mind has swayed between the two terms of the problem. Sometimes it has so emphasized the infinite that the finite has been swallowed up and lost; and man has almost been deprived of his personal being. Sometimes it has so emphasized the finite that the infinite has lost reality, and man has become almost a god, the director of his own destinies, the author of his own salvation. In confronting this mystery, it is helpful to remember that we are not contemplating two spatial magnitudes, one very large, and one very small, but two personalities, in comparing whom the analogy of space does not apply. We are not dealing with quantities. We are moving in the region of ethical and spiritual reality. In this region, person enters into communion with person, and neither loses in this relationship fulness of life. This we know, not by philosophical demonstration, but by experimental proof. So it is, in this problem of the relation of the infinite person, God, to the finite person, man. We can and do have an experience, though we can never have an adequate

philosophy. We know God in His sovereignty, we know man in his freedom. A one-sided intellectualism will affirm one term in a manner so unqualified, as to call into existence another equally one-sided intellectualism, which will affirm the other term in the problem in a manner equally unqualified and misleading. Christian theology must do justice to the fulness of Christian experience. Accordingly, Article III emphasizes the sovereignty of God. In Article IV we are reminded that man is made in the image of God, and so is not a thing, but a person, endowed with the mysterious gift of freedom, according to which he cannot be coerced from without, but is himself responsible for those moral choices, which he is constantly called upon to make, and which, as they are continually being made, give a bent to his character, and may fix his destiny.

There is much modern thought which lifts responsibility from man and lays it on his environment. This article does not deal thus lightly with man's endowment of personality, but does him the honor of recognizing his freedom, and calls upon him to realize his responsibility.

CHAPTER VI

ARTICLE V.—*Of the Sin of Man.*—We believe that our first parents, being tempted, chose evil, and so fell away from God and came under the power of sin, the penalty of which is eternal death; and that, by reason of this disobedience, all men are born with a sinful nature, that we have broken God's law and that no man can be saved but by His grace.

This article deals with the most tremendous fact of human history, the fact of sin. Endless debate has arisen regarding various aspects of this gloomy and mysterious subject. It may be questioned, indeed, whether the debate has not diverted men's minds from the awfulness of the tragedy, and the intolerable burden of Man's responsibility for it. This article confines itself to the answers of the Christian conscience to the deep questions which arise as we contemplate the fact of Sin. (1) Was it necessary? Some theories, philosophical and scientific, have maintained that it was. Sin was, according to this view, a necessary stage in man's progress toward virtue. He could not reach goodness, without first tasting the bitterness of moral evil. The article meets this view with flat denial. If sin is a necessity, whether physical or metaphysical, it is not sin, whether in the race or the individual. Let there be no paltering with conscience on this point. The preacher need have no hesitation in proclaiming that Sin is Sin. That is a value-judgment, which has the consent of every

conscience, that is not stifled by false estimates. (2) How did it arise? The narrative in Genesis is not history, as we moderns regard history. But it is true to the very core. Sin was not inflicted on man by an alien influence. Man was not compelled to Sin. He sinned of his own act. He was tempted, but not forced. There arose for him a moral crisis. A choice confronted him; and he chose the evil, and rejected the good. There are determinative acts in life. We may have forgotten them, or misinterpreted them. But they have controlled our own career, and have entered with pregnant meaning into the lives of others beyond our reckoning. After some such analogy, we interpret the history of the human race. A record began which is the story of mankind, stained throughout with nameless wrong. (3) What is its root in human nature? When we push our analysis of sin far enough, what do we find prompting it? The answer of Scripture, reaffirmed in conscience, is unbelief. The ultimate choice for man lay between God's will and man's will. Man would not submit himself in trustful submission to God's revelation of what is good. Sin is essentially rejection of God. One writer calls it "deicide"—the attempt to dethrone the Almighty. Let us keep carefully to the personal relations of God and man. We are not dealing with abstractions. The Bible sets before us God, who is Love, whose will is supreme in creation and providence, and man who is made by God and meant for God. Man ought to have yielded himself to God;

and so doing he would have glorified God, and reached his own good. He did not. He set his own will against God. That is sin, in origin and in meaning, and in all its innumerable manifestations. (4) What are its consequences? We must be careful to avoid imputing any arbitrariness to God in connection with the consequences which sin brings upon the sinner. The analogy of the court room does not help us here. Human justice adds something to the crime, to express the condemnation which society pronounces upon it. But the punishment of sin is just the sin itself, as it works itself out in the experience of the sinner. There is nothing more terrible about sin than the inevitableness of its issues. They come upon the sinner with the inexorableness of a law of nature. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Yet we must not exclude God from this inevitable reaction of the moral order against the fact of sin. This reaction is His justice. The consequences which devolve upon the sinner, follow by Divine appointment, and come with the Divine will. In all the relations of God and man, we must recognize to the full their personal character. When we sin, we are confronted by the living God, the God of love and holiness. Against *Him*, and not an *order* or a *system*, we have sinned. Judgment and redemption alike are His strange work. The consequences of sin are the meaning of sin, and that is threefold: (a) Separation from God. Sin and holiness are mutually exclusive. To live in sin is to live without

God, and to be without hope in the world. No language can exaggerate the horror of such a situation. God is the chief Good, the true Life of the soul. To sin is to separate ourselves from God, to find ourselves self-excluded from the fellowship which is meant to be the crowning glory and blessing of human nature, to be alone for ever with the reproaches of a guilty conscience. (b) Bondage to sin. The modern mind is very susceptible to the idea of the power of habit. Common observation and scientific psychology alike have forced upon men's attention the terrific power, which repeated actions gain over the whole man, and the terrifying swiftness with which this tyranny is established. Sin is not, in the individual or the race, a mere heap of unrelated incidents. It is, as one theologian has expressed it, "a kingdom of sin," whose subjects are bond slaves of a force, to meet which they have no countervailing energy. Sin is man's doing and man's responsibility; but it has fastened upon humanity like a fate, which has wrought incalculable and unspeakable woe amid the innumerable members of a sinful race. (c) Death. That life, which is not hid with Christ in God, is already death. The corrupting and destructive effects of this inward principle of death are, in part, manifest during our time on earth. The experience of dying, while yet unreconciled to God, is, as one has said, the "sacrament of sin"—sign and seal and final application, within time, of what sin is, and effects. What lies beyond, who shall say? We can put no concrete

meaning into "eternal death." A horror of great darkness breaks on us. Not to be with God, not to be of the fellowship, to be left to ourselves; that is sin, that is death. Modern refinement rejects the crudities of the older preaching. But the fact of sin remains; and it means death, to the utmost confines of that awful conception. (5) How far does it extend? Does it include the whole human race? Are all men sinners? The article affirms the universality of sin. It does so upon two grounds. (a) The first may be termed doctrinal, and was laid down by Paul and by Augustine. The human race is not an aggregate of unrelated units. It is an organic unity. Individual human beings are members of that organism, and for good and for evil share its life, and are endowed with its moral qualities. Sin is no mere accident which may or may not adhere to the individual. It is a racial characteristic; and this sinful nature is part of the heritage of every human being that is born into the race. It is in this aspect that Scripture presents the human race. On this sombre fact Augustine laid emphasis. The history of nations and of mankind everywhere confirms the verdict that men are by nature sinful. The operation of heredity and environment have created a situation, which unquestionably influences for evil every human being, who belongs to what is in very deed a "kingdom of sin," who breathes its atmosphere, and bears its impress. (b) The second is furnished by observation and experience. It is true that it is impossible to have under direct

observation every member of the race. But all that we know of men, of every race, confirms the judgment that there is "none righteous, no not one." The older theology erred in describing the wickedness of man in terms that are a manifest exaggeration, and have repelled the modern mind, and are the cause of a revival of Pelagianism. No man, of course, is as bad as he might be. Still it remains true that a man's character is determined by his actions; and, if even one of these is sinful, the whole man is involved. It is not to bring a railing accusation against our fellows, to say that they are all sinful, not one capable of standing in his own righteousness secure before the just judgment of God. And what we say of them, they say of themselves. The more competent they are to judge themselves, the more severe their judgment is. The educated and disciplined conscience, unblinded by habitual sin, unhardened by pride and self-righteousness, bears witness to the presence and operation of sin; and the man, who is by all tests "good," is the one man who charges himself with shortcomings and offences, and with sincerity and humility declares himself a sinner as he stands in the searching light of the Divine holiness. For the most of us, there is no possibility of mistake. We know that we are sinners, by nature, and by long habit. From every side the evidence presses in upon us. A great poet has declared that he sees "reasons and reasons" for the truth of Christianity; and this, above all, that it is bold enough to

meet the old stupid claim of self-righteousness with flat denial, and to teach definitely "original sin, the corruption of man's heart." Modern Pelagianism, with its magnifying of man's goodness, and its depreciation of God's grace, is not merely a heresy, it is sheer unmitigated ignorance, of which, common knowledge of men and their ways, as well as of our own hearts and their deceitfulness, is the exposure and the refutation.

We ought not to pass without mention the serious problem which emerges when we affirm the universality of sin. If the race is sinful, and if every human being is sinful, the pressure upon the individual must be inconceivably great, so that his becoming an actual transgressor is practically inevitable, how then is he responsible? The problem is insoluble by any calculation which we can make. But we set against the gigantic influence of heredity, environment, and example, the fact, to which experience gives ample warrant, the fact of man's freedom, of his ability to cope with all the circumstances in which he finds himself, and through them and spite of them reach toward the end which is set before him. In other words, used by Dr. Denney, the universe in which man is set, with all the history which is behind him, fixes his *trial*, not his *destiny*. Life is probation. Man, free and responsive, undergoes the discipline. If he fails under the trial, he has not been bludgeoned by fate. The burden of the failure rests on him. Here we bow before the sovereignty of God, in His

love and wisdom. The kind of probation, the degree and measure of the discipline, are secrets hid in the everlasting counsels of God. He alone knows the whole situation, and can weigh the responsibility, and estimate the guilt. With respect to the innumerable souls who have passed through "earth's probation space" and are now entered on the award, we can only say, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" It is not for us to pass judgment on any man. Be it ours to note the conditions under which life is to be conducted, by relation to which its issues shall be determined. (6) In view of the appalling fact of sin, and of the state in which all sinful men are placed, how is deliverance possible, and what guarantee have we that it will ever be achieved? (a) In the first place, let us be sure of what the situation actually is. In plain words, it is one of infinite need. There is nothing man can do, which will deal effectively and finally with the situation created by sin. Sin has separated him from God—he cannot heal the breach. It has reduced him to bondage—he cannot break the fetters which hold him. He has the sentence of death in himself—he cannot acquire spiritual life by any effort he can make. His very nature is tainted and corrupt—he cannot cleanse his soul. In short, man needs salvation. And salvation, that is, in one aspect, deliverance from sin; in another, attainment of the good, individual and social, which he has missed. Before this, his exceeding need, man stands helpless. (b) In the

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second place, let us grasp the central truth of the Gospel. God enters into the situation created by sin, and deals with it as man cannot do, provides the salvation of which man stands in infinite need. He does so by his own personal action and suffering. He is Love. His grace is just His love, in active operation for the redemption of man. Between man and uttermost ruin, stands nothing but grace, Divine, all-sufficient. Salvation is possible only through God's grace; and, for those in whom that grace operates, salvation in every aspect, to the utmost limit of conquest of all evil, and attainment of all good, is not merely a wistful hope, but a glorious certainty, filling the trustful and expectant soul with hope and gladness.

CHAPTER VII

ARTICLE VI.—*Of the Grace of God.*—We believe that God, out of His great love for the world, has given His only begotten Son to be the Saviour of sinners, and in the Gospel freely offers His all-sufficient salvation to all men. We believe also that God, in His own good pleasure, gave to His Son a people, an innumerable multitude, chosen in Christ unto holiness, service and salvation.

The characteristic action of love is giving; and the glory of that giving is its freedom. When the giving is on behalf of the needy, it will be commensurate with the need. The need of man is salvation. The gift of grace is the Saviour, the One who, by His relation to God, is alone competent to do for man what man is unable to achieve by his own effort. The history of the redemption of man is the record of God's self-giving; and this giving, on God's part reached its climax in a deed of gift, "so amazing, so divine," that verbal forms can never frame its limitless generosity, only the heart can respond to it by a surrender that includes all that man has and is. Let us make no mistake. The essence of Christianity is not a philosophical conception; it is a deed. God loved; and God gave, the utmost He could give, His only-begotten Son; and in that giving gave Himself, to the uttermost sacrifice of which an infinite Person is capable. Christianity accordingly comes to men, not as a theory or a speculation, but as a living word, "a faithful saying," a message of salvation. When this mes-

sage is fully proclaimed, the meaning of Christ is set forth, and the power of Christ is active, and the salvation wrought by Christ is put within the reach of those who need it. The preacher has a far higher office than that of a lecturer on theology, philosophy, ethics, or science. He is the messenger, through whom the offer of the Gospel is made to human beings, freely and in all its fulness. Two things exactly correspond—our own exceeding need, and God's exceeding love. They meet in Christ, and nowhere else. Therefore, the one, all-comprehensive business of the preacher is to "preach Christ," and to convey to sinful men the salvation, whose source is God, whose mediator is Jesus Christ, whose application to the soul is by the Word and the Spirit of God, whose efficiency and sufficiency are perfect and complete. At this point, there rises to our view a patent and lamentable fact; and with the fact comes a problem which has given rise to a devastating controversy. The Christian salvation is all-sufficient and is offered, honestly and freely, to all men; but the grievous truth has to be faced—those for whom it is intended do not all receive it. Only some do. How does this come about? Ask the believer how he came to believe. He will reply that it was through the grace of God assisting him. What, then, of those who do not believe? Was that assisting grace denied them? Some theologians have dared to say that God passed over certain souls, and withheld from them the power that would have enabled them to believe. Such theologians

urge that this is a great mystery, and very terrible to contemplate (*Horribile decretum, fateor*, says Calvin), but an inevitable inference from the sovereignty of God. Not to draw this inference is said to reflect upon the glory of God, and to be worthy of severe penalty at the bar of human justice. The article before us deals with the fact that some do believe, and some do not, in the only way open to a Church seeking to confess its faith, viz., to state the contents of that faith as they are warranted by Christian experience, and by the sacred Scripture. The bestowal of grace is part of the blessed experience of the believer, and ought to enter into his humble, God-glorifying confession of faith. The withholding of that grace from a fellow sinner, no more sinful than himself, cannot be a fact of the believer's experience, and ought not to enter into his confession. He may draw it as an inference from a dogma; but he ought not to make it an article of faith and force it on others, under threat of penalty. Our article, accordingly, deals exclusively with believers, who have received the great salvation, and are living in the possession and enjoyment of it. It lays aside, as not coming within the scope or function of a creed, the rejection of the offered salvation on the part of those who have refused what was freely and in good faith offered to them. What, then, are we warranted and called to affirm regarding believers? (a) They constitute "a people, an innumerable multitude." It is one of the deepest convictions of the New Testament

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Christians that the fellowship of believers, including all who then were "in Christ," and all who should ever enter into that blessed relationship to God through Christ, constitute the true Israel, the true people of God, a spiritual organism composed of a "great multitude whom no man can number," but a true community, in which all who belong to it are members in the Body of Christ and are members of one another. This community, like Israel of old, is called into being by the redeeming action of God, and is the subject of His gracious dealing in history, till the course of time is merged in eternal blessedness. (b) This great company of the redeemed, of every age, and race, and clime is the Father's gift to the Son of His love, who, as the Servant of the Lord, fulfilled the redeeming purpose of God at a cost for which there is no computation. This great salvation, applied to an innumerable host of believing souls, is the joy of Jesus, the joy that was set before Him, the joy of an accepted sacrifice. Let not the Church as a whole imagine that it is somehow conferring honor on the Redeemer by its worship. Let not the individual vainly conceive that he pays Jesus a compliment by believing in Him. The whole company of believers, together with every individual believer, forms that gift, or that reward, which God prepared and conferred on Him who, in His redeeming work, became "obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." All whom the Father gives, most surely come to Him who is the Son of the Father. The enthroned Redeemer will in no wise

cast them out. He will receive them as the Father's precious gift. He will rest in His love, and joy over them with singing. (c) This company is not thus dealt with by God, for its own honor or glory. The individual believer has not been made the subject of God's gracious dealing in Christ, with a view to any selfish satisfaction of his own. "Election," or "choice," is to be interpreted through love, and is to be deprived, in a believer's estimate of his own state of grace, of all taint of selfishness. In the Church as a whole, and in each believer, we see an ulterior end, which the sovereign love of God has in view. That end is described in the article as threefold. (1) Holiness. The divine love is holy; and where love does its saving work holiness must characterize the issue. The believer, in acknowledging the redeeming grace of God and receiving the free offer of the Gospel, becomes pledged to holiness as the goal of all his moral endeavor. The Church, if it is to vindicate its right to be known as the Body of Christ, must make holiness an essential part of its witness to the world and of its constant training of its members. Election, divorced from holiness, would be a moral horror. (2) Service. The believer, who is the subject of God's love in Christ, is also, as such, its organ and instrument. Redeemed by Christ, he is Christ's "slave," committed to a service, which knows no limit, whose motive is the constraining love of Christ, whose field of action is not less than the race of mankind, of which Jesus Christ is Saviour and

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Lord. Such service is not a generous behavior, on which we might plume ourselves, and for which God might be conceived as being grateful. It is our bounden duty, a line of action incumbent on those who have been redeemed at infinite cost. A Christian who is not Christ's "joyous slave" is a contradiction in terms, and an ethical monstrosity.

(3) Salvation. The purpose of God toward all who are in Christ is salvation, as a present fact, as a continuous process, and as an ultimate consummation. The New Testament usage describes salvation in each of these aspects. We *are* saved, who have given ourselves to Jesus. We *are being* saved, through the keeping of grace of God. We *shall be* saved, when the end of time and space is come, when judgment is set, and the eternal world has begun. Salvation, in its fullest sense, is the purpose of God, and is at once the possession and the expectation of all who have been "chosen in Christ." Salvation rests only on the bed rock of the Divine purpose, "all other ground is sinking sand." Because underlying our faith, there is the will of God, we can go forward, not trusting in our faith, but in the holy and loving will, which has wrought in us this state of grace wherein we stand. Let it be well understood, that the doctrine of Election is for believers only. It ought not to be permitted to rise as a spectre before the exercised but as yet undecided soul. The question for such an one is not "Am I elected"? That would be an outrageous intrusion into the eternal counsels of God. The

only proper question is: "Do you now own Christ as Saviour, and Lord?—Do you now give yourself utterly and for ever to Him?" That question you must answer for yourself. It is your responsibility. But when you have answered it, in the affirmative, you are permitted and enjoined to believe, that you have become a member of the Body of Christ, that you are in Him, and, as being so, are the object of God's redeeming purpose which cannot fail in time or in eternity. Election is not the door by which we enter. But having entered, we find it the rock on which we stand.

CHAPTER VIII

ARTICLE VII.—*Of the Lord Jesus Christ.*—We believe in and confess the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, who, being the Eternal Son of God, for us men and for our salvation became truly man, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, yet without sin. Unto us He has revealed the Father, by His word and Spirit, making known the perfect will of God. For our redemption He fulfilled all righteousness, offered Himself a perfect sacrifice on the cross, satisfied Divine justice and made propitiation for the sins of the whole world. He rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, where He ever intercedes for us. In the hearts of believers He abides forever as the indwelling Christ; above us and over us all He rules; wherefore, unto Him we render love, obedience and adoration as our Prophet, Priest and King.

This article is to be read and understood in close connection with the one immediately preceding. Other religions have magnified the grace of the God who is worshipped. We need not depreciate the devout spirit that breathes through the "Psalms of Mahratta Saints," which Principal MacNicol has translated, or the other products of Hindu piety which are referred to in Prof. Underwood's recent volume on "Conversion, Christian and Non-Christian." But we have to affirm the personal reality of Jesus Christ, the historic character of His portrait as presented in the Gospels, and the quality of the work which He has wrought in His office as Saviour of the World. We interpret the grace of God through Jesus; and we see in Jesus the agent through whom God's grace works for the salvation of sinners. Faith's interest in the "Glory of the

Redeemer" is not the philosopher's interest in a speculative problem. It is the adoring interest of a sinner, "saved by grace," in the One, who loved him, and gave Himself for him. Intellectual curiosity has no place here. We are moving in the region of historic fact and spiritual realities. We desire to set forth "the fact of Christ," the historic fact, that which men on this earth, heard, and saw, and looked upon, and handled, of the Word of Life; and the glorious fact of an uplifted, ever-living, all-victorious Saviour, whom we have received as our Saviour, and whom we know in a blessed fellowship through the Spirit.

It follows that such an article as this, "Of the Lord Jesus Christ," ought to be brief, simple, keeping close to Scripture and experience, and avoiding as much as possible technical language, or words and phrases, which are the *debris* of ancient controversies. Analysis of the article before us yields the following divisions: (A) The object of Faith: Note: (1) The names by which He is designated. The first is *Jesus*, the name which brings before us as none other does the personal reality of the Redeemer. He is no mythical Figure. He bore that name on earth. And those, who now follow Him as Master, and know Him as Friend, who owe everything to Him, and are moved toward Him in love and worship, delight in His name and use it in their hours of deepest religious experience. Hymnology is a witness to this usage, throughout all ages of the Church's history.

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The second is *Christ*. With this designation, there rises before the mind the history of God's dealings with His ancient people, of which the Old Testament is the record. Jesus is the crown of that long dealing, the fulfilment of all God's promise, the Anointed One, who came, in the fulness of time, to open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. It is not an illegitimate extension of the conception of Messiahship, to see in Jesus, the Christ of humanity, "the dear desire of every nation," "the crown of Hinduism," and of every religion, in which the human spirit made its sincere, but dim and perilous, way Godward. The third is *Lord*. The associations of this name, as used in the New Testament, are with the term *Jehovah* in the Old Testament. For Jewish believers, Jesus Christ held the place, and fulfilled the functions of the *Jehovah* of the Old Testament. That Jewish monotheists should have called Jesus "Lord," knowing that the term connoted divinity in the fullest sense, is indeed amazing, but they did it; and not one of them ever imagined that, in doing so, they were deifying a man, or were making Jesus a demi-god, or were worshipping a second God. They were monotheists still; though their thought of God was widening and deepening in accordance with, but far exceeding, the highest teaching of their sacred scriptures. Note (2) in the second place, the position ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ in the action of God's grace toward sinful men. He is "the only Mediator between

God and man." Greek thought was dualistic, and required a Being to cross the gulf between the Absolute on the one side, the material universe on the other. This, however, is not at all the line on which Christian thought moved. Christianity keeps to the ethical sphere. There is, indeed, a dualism between God and man, namely, that which sin has wrought. One is indeed wanted to cross that gulf, so completely that, in Him, God and man might meet, and be at one. That One is Jesus Christ. He, and He alone, mediates between those whose union and communion sin had made impossible. If such an One is to be what is needed in the situation created by sin, He must be all Divine and all human. The word "only" is to be emphasized. None other than He could be the required Mediator; and beside Him none other is needed. Church history supplies a melancholy instance of how a sincere, but mistaken, estimate of the greatness of Christ made Him inaccessible to man, and ineffective as Mediator; so that others had to be applied to by sinners, in order to have the benefits of His mediation made practically efficacious. The heart of the great Reformation lies in that word "only." We repeat it to-day with full emphasis. "Jesus Only" is the motto of New Testament Christianity; and The United Church makes that motto its own, and with it confronts the modern world, as the reformers, and the apostles confronted the world of the sixteenth century, and of the first.

(B) The Person of Christ. For His position as

Mediator His Person cannot be merely Divine, nor merely human. He must be, in the fullest sense of the terms, Divine and human. The Christian's knowledge of his own need leads him to a quite untechnical, but an absolutely convinced affirmation, that the Saviour of men must be as Divine as the Father, whose gift to the world He is, and as human, in all respects except sin, as those whom He came into the world to save. These two affirmations are required by the Christian experience of salvation, are securely grounded in the New Testament Scriptures, and find their place in the creeds both of the ancient Church and of the Reformation period. They are made now again by The United Church of Canada. It ought to be noted, in passing, that it is much more important to emphasize the points of doctrine in regard to which denominations are at one, than those upon which they differ. Here is central truth, without which the Christian Church could not endure for a generation, with which it will stand to the end of time. And upon this truth denominations are agreed, though they differ in regard to what, compared to this, are secondary matters; and in this fact of their deep religious unity lies the hope of their ultimate reunion. Into the profound mystery of the relation of the Divine to the human in the person of Christ our article does not presume to enter. It sets the facts side by side; as indeed even such a creed as that of Chalcedon found itself, after centuries of conflict, compelled to do. (1) The first fact is that

the Redeemer of the world is "the eternal Son of God." His coming into the world is not a new idea in the mind of God, nor a modification of the being of God. Theology will need, after its most profound discussions, to come back to the ultimate and infinite simplicity of John 3: 16. God is Love—it is His eternal being. In the depths of that eternity He has before Him, as the object of His love, His own Logos or Word, who, after human analogy, is named the Son, the same in substance or essence with the Father, while having in the Father the ground of His own being. This, His "only begotten Son," He gave. Him He did not spare. More than this, and less than this, we dare not say. It underlies the fact of Christ, as we know Him in history as the crown of God's self-revelation and self-communication, or recognize in Him the Supreme manifestation of the Logos, Word, or Reason, of God, immanent in the whole universe, or discover Him in experience to be our living Saviour and Lord, the only Mediator between us and God.

(2) The second fact is that this Being, thus related to Almighty God, the Father, "for us men and for our salvation became truly man." The sentence ends with the words "yet without sin." The true humanity of the Redeemer is as much a part of His glory as is His Divinity, and is as essential to the fulness and security of our salvation. In the ancient Church, under influences coming from prevalent Greek philosophy, the Divinity was so stressed that the full and true humanity was lost

sight of, and Christ was further and further removed from the kinship of men. Byzantine art helped in the process, until, to meet the craving of the human heart, other mediators had to be proposed to faith, who would be more near to man than the remote Divine Lord, and so more able to help and save. Modern thought has swung in the opposite direction. Many portraits of Christ have been painted, in which He has been presented as merely human. Not merely have the lovelier phases of human character been imputed to Him, but even moral defects have been noted as adhering to Him. The attempts to fasten moral faults on Jesus have, it is now generally admitted, turned out to be miserable failures, and have redounded to the discredit of their authors, rather than of Him whom they asperse. In reality such attempts arise from the quite unproved hypothesis that sin is essential to humanity, so that any being who is "truly man" cannot be "without sin." Christian faith holds a totally different view of human nature. Man is made in the image of God. Sin defaces that image, and deforms human nature. Man is never so human as when he is like God, in whom sin has no place. Our Redeemer is "truly human," not merely, as the article, by a slip, implies, in *spite of* sinlessness, but *because of* it. Being as He is, without the discordant presence of sin, Jesus Christ is not only the revelation of God, but the revelation of man, the very truth of humanity, in the fulness of man's spiritual being, in the completeness of his

personality, full-orbed, harmonious, and perfect. How One who was "in the form of God" (Phil. 2: 5-11) could be "made in the likeness of men," and "be found in fashion as a man," is, in the nature of the case, inconceivable by our limited intelligence. Even the inspired apostle, in the passage referred to, does not attempt to explain a metaphysical problem. He stands at gaze, in awe and wonder, before the most stupendous mystery of love ever revealed to man, the self-sacrifice of God, in which the Father's surrender of the Son is carried out in the Son's surrender of Himself.

While we are thus silent in the presence of the infinite sacrifice, and dare not ask how it could take place, there is one truth that is essential to our salvation, namely, that the Redeemer of men is not the product of any forces, physical or metaphysical, that are resident in human nature. What took place, when Jesus Christ was born, was the entrance of God into humanity, not a leap upward of man into the region of the Divine. This is the deep truth of the story of the Virgin Birth. It was intended to guard this absolutely essential truth of the Gospel, not alone the sinlessness of Jesus, but the sublime mystery of His Divine origin. He is not a Hero, turned into a Divinity. He is "very God of very God," who could not have saved us otherwise, than by entering, from above, through the power of the Divine spirit, into the stream of human life, and by sharing to the last uttermost depths the experience of men, fathoming, as only a sinless

being could, the final tragedy of sin. To make it clear to the whole world, that its Lord is not a man who became God, but God who became man, the Christian church has in all its history declared a Virgin Birth to be the physical condition, under which the miracle of grace took effect in human history. It is recorded in the narratives of Matthew and Luke, and is declared in the Creed, to be the condition, under which the Gospel message became credible. It was in this manner that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Only on a deistic view of God, or a dualistic view of His relation to the world, can the event thus recorded be ruled out *a priori* as impossible. But Christian faith is not hampered by *a priori* philosophical conceptions. It is part of the Christian view of the relation between God and man, that these two are akin, separated only by sin. Those, who regard it as sublimest truth that God did become man, will read the narratives in Matthew and Luke with deep appreciation of their exquisite tenderness and delicacy, and will find that faith in Christ carries with it a recognition of the profound religious truth of the narratives, and a new readiness to accept them as historic fact. (C) The Work of Christ. Contemporary thought has always modified the Church's statement of its faith; and sometimes has made that statement less true to Scriptural teaching than it ought to have been. This has happened very markedly in respect to the doctrine of the work of Christ. In the earlier

centuries, we find a strange mythological theory that Christ's death was a ransom paid to Satan, as well as a more speculative doctrine regarding the impartation of spiritual life through the eucharist. In mediæval times, feudalism makes its mark on Anselm's view of the death of Christ as restoration of the injured honor of God. Reformation dogma is deeply influenced by current theories of law and jurisprudence. Our article strives to be strictly Scriptural and experimental; though in our phrase, to be noticed below, a purely technical and partly misleading form of words is used. The work of Christ is viewed in two aspects: (1) The Revelation of the Father. God's revelation of Himself has been progressive, and is manifold. But all that He has made known regarding Himself, culminates and gains its final interpretation in Christ. "The Son" reveals "The Father." The heart of God beats with the love of a Father. The highest ideal of Fatherhood is found in the Being, with whom Jesus lived in daily communion, to whom He prayed, with whom He was one in His inmost personal life. This revelation of the Father is made, therefore, *primarily* through the Sonship of Christ. In His filial life and character we see God. Knowing Him, we know the Father. In fellowship with Him, we have the Father also. *Secondarily*, we are led, through the teaching of Christ, accompanied as that is by the influence of the Divine Spirit, to a growing apprehension of "the perfect will of God." If we do not know the Father-love of God, it is because we

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have not meditated, and practised the teaching of Jesus, and have not opened mind and heart to His Spirit. Jesus is the perfect Interpreter of God. Individuals and societies are called on to make His interpretation of God their own, by meditation in the Word, and by obedience to the Will of God.

(2) The Redemption of Man. When we contemplate men in their sinfulness, as they are seen in the light of the love and holiness of God, when we consider the nature of sin, as it is to be estimated both by the Holy Will of God, and the Holy Love which gave the Son for men, and spared Him not the Cross, we are prepared to find in the doctrine of the Atonement a meeting-place of infinities, a mercy-seat overshadowed by mysteries. How shall man be redeemed? How can sin be forgiven in any manner that is ethically worthy? How can the guilty, polluted, enslaved, soul be set free, and entered on a course of moral endeavor with a new and unfailing endowment of motive-power? How can the breach which sin had made be healed, so that God shall draw near to man in act and attitude at once reconciled and reconciling? How shall sinful men approach the Holy God, not trembling in guilty fear, but in a spirit at once of humility and of confidence? Not even Scripture itself answers fully these and such like questions. Faith, listening, hears the truths of inspiration sounding in sunken waters far beneath. Four such truths, our article states as facts of believing apprehension, without attempting a philosophy of them. (a) Our Saviour

rendered to God a perfect obedience, He fulfilled all righteousness. Under no condition, less exigent than this, could God undertake so great a task as the redemption of man. He must have rendered to Him, from within humanity, a righteousness flawless and complete. (b) Our Saviour offered Himself to God as a perfect sacrifice. This is the open secret of His life, the action of His soul; enacted and re-enacted in crisis after crisis—Baptism—Temptation—Transfiguration—at Cæsarea Philippi—at Bethany—in Gethsemane; finally presented in the uttermost surrender of the Cross. This, too, must be, before God and man can be “at one,” a life yielded in holiness and devotion, not one ingredient of the cup refused, that the Father might be glorified, and His redeeming love be made victorious. (c) He satisfied Divine justice. The word “satisfaction” has a long history behind it, going back to Tertullian, and having its roots in Roman law. There is no doubt that the word, and the whole phrase, are not well suited to their purpose. Yet a substitute for them might be hard to find. At least let us be done with the imagery of the court room—a Judge on the bench, administering a code of more than Draconian severity, never “satisfied” unless retributive punishment—capital punishment—had overwhelmed the criminal with unutterable destruction. Such language has been used both in the statement and the criticism of the doctrine of atonement, both unwisely and unfairly. In fairness, the conception of the satisfaction of justice should be treated more

broadly, and delivered from an association of ideas that do not properly belong to it. "Justice" stands for the whole moral order; and in that order, the character of God is expressed; and on the maintenance of that order, the very being of God depends. A redemption which left the moral world unstable, a forgiveness which permitted sin to pass unjudged, would be indeed a "moral horror." Holiness and love must act together in atonement. The character of God must be vindicated in its completeness, both His redeeming judgment and His redeeming love. After all, perhaps, the article is not so far wrong, where it speaks of the Incarnate Son, by His obedience and His sacrifice, "satisfying Divine justice." It might perhaps more fittingly have spoken of satisfying God Himself, the God of Holiness and Love who sees, in the action and passion of the Redeemer, His whole nature at once revealed and realized—not holiness apart from love—not love apart from holiness—but both together, so that words, spoken of the Son, we may apply to the Father also. He sees the travail of His soul and is "satisfied." It is certain that, unless God be satisfied, in every attribute of His character, man's conscience cannot be at rest. (d) He made propitiation for the sins of the whole world. If we could recapture the inner experience of the worshipper, while the blood flowed in the Temple courts, and all the expiatory rites were performed, we would read our New Testaments with a new intelligence. But there is another way of reading

Scripture, and that is by studying our own hearts, and interpreting its mystic utterances and its fathomless thoughts, by the guidance of the Holy One who speaks both in the pages of the written word, and in the echoing chambers of memory and of conscience. "Propitiation" is a word that offends many, and perplexes even believing souls. Let us be done with the idea of a God, reluctant to forgive, having to be propitiated before He would begin to be gracious. That, of course, is mere paganism. The God who sent His Son to save the world is not like that. It is God, who, in Christ, reconciles the world to Himself. It is God, who, in Christ, provides the propitiation. The atonement is not made by Another to induce God to be merciful. The atonement is God's action. The propitiation is God's design, and God's deed. Can we, who are so far removed from the mental attitude of the worshipper trained under the ceremonial system, use this word "propitiation" (as in John 2: 2) with a real sense of its value? We can, only on one condition, namely, that we acknowledge the verdict of conscience, and the witness of the Spirit regarding sin. If it be a burden which cannot be borne, then propitiation means that it has been rolled upon Another, and has been borne by Him, in an agony, the agony of a sinless soul, infinitely exceeding the worst pains of a sin-convicted soul. Intellect can never make a logical *nexus* between the suffering Saviour and the Divine action in forgiveness. But he, who feels the weight of sin, knows,

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in part, at least, what the connection is, and can use the phrase "propitiation" without any sense of unreality, and can say, with our great evangelical hymn writer:

"I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God.
He bears them all, and frees us
From the accursed load."

This is the sinner's only religion. (D) The Living Lord. We do not cherish in grateful and regretful memory a dead Hero. We have fellowship with a living Lord, who is also the Comrade of our way, nearer to us than the most loved of human beings. If mystery surrounds the mode of being of the pre-existent Christ, a like mystery baffles our intellects, when we try to construe the kind of life He lives now in the glory He has with the Father. Four points present themselves for reverent contemplation. (a) His resurrection. When His life within the bounds of space and time was ended, He began another life, where such limitations do not obtain, a timeless, spaceless life of whose conditions and circumstances our imagination can form no reliable pictures. If we use pictures at all, let us see to it that they do not impose themselves on our minds, and drag the purely spiritual down to the level of the material. The one verity, of which Faith declines to be denied, is that the risen Lord is "this same Jesus," who lived His sinless days on earth and, in fulfilment of His atoning work," was cruci-

fied dead and buried." To ask how the transition was made from the one mode of being to the other is to ask an unanswerable question. The attempt to dogmatize regarding it often leads to irreverent and unedifying discussion. God wrought in His omnipotence, and declared Jesus Christ to be the Son of God "with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." The act of God is as inconceivable by the intellect as is any other creative work of the Almighty.

(b) His Ascension. In this great word, we are apprehending the transition from our Lord's life on earth to His life of exaltation, from the point of view of those, from whom He was separated that day on Olivet, who yet returned to Jerusalem with great joy. It is misusing Scripture to conceive of the ascension as removal from one point in space to another point in space. The ascension means His exaltation above earth, and space, and time, and material embodiment, to a condition, of which we can form no conception, and of which we ought not to try to make a picture. He has gone to His Father and our Father; He has entered upon the Divine glory, which was His eternal abode; He is on the throne, which He gained through the last supreme sacrifice of Himself. He is not here; He is risen. We can meet Him, and hold communion with Him, only if we be raised with Him, and in spirit are joined to Him who is Spirit, and is no more limited by spatial conditions. If we cannot conceive of Him under imagery of space, neither can we

form pictures of the mode of His present action. It is certain that the Father lives and works, and we cannot think that the Son, who lived and wrought on earth, is quiescent. Scripture makes no attempt to lift the veil, save by means of a conception drawn from the ancient ritual. Even as the High Priest pled for the people when he entered within the veil, so behind the veil of time and sense, He who is at once Priest and Sacrifice pleads the cause of those who are still under the discipline of life, beset by difficulties and temptations, often failing and sinning. Again, we must be on our guard against degrading the profound symbolism of the Temple ritual, lest in doing so we miss what our souls need. The sacrifice of Calvary is not far behind in time; it is before God an eternal fact. The love, that poured itself out there for man, has not ceased to function. It acts within the timeless, spaceless empyrean of the Divine Presence. If it were not so—if He had forgotten—or if the Father would not hear—we would be of all men most miserable. Love, Divine, sacrificial, atoning, rises like a fountain; and in its ceaseless action, the Father who gave the Son, and the Son who gave Himself, work together in perfect unison, only because it is so, could we bear to live, or dare to die.

(c) The Indwelling Christ. The Lord is risen indeed; yet He abides in us, and we in Him. It is a paradox; but it is true. Logic can dismember the formal statement; but the fact remains, a blessed experience of those, who have given themselves to

Him as their Saviour and Lord. In our relations to Jesus Christ, there is no distance to be overcome. Between us and Him, there is a union so close, that nature, and human nature alike, can only suggest analogies, but cannot set forth the fulness of the fact. Vine and branches, head and members, bridegroom and bride—such images, used by our Lord and His apostles, lead us on to a secret, which eludes logic, while it is realized in experience. Oftentimes, the thought of the *unio mystica*, as it has been called, has been dismissed as mere mysticism. Let us drop the name, if we do not like it. But never fail to make the experience the object of believing prayer, after the manner of St. Paul, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." (Ephes. 3: 17.) May "come to dwell," as we open our hearts to Him in believing surrender. Faith in Christ does not leave Christ outside. He enters by that door. Here we are at the heart of Christianity. The object of our faith is not the historic Christ alone, whose memory we might cherish; nor only the Divine transcendent Christ, before whom our souls lie prone in reverence and awe; but also, while not forgetting either the humiliation or the exaltation, the Christ who is within, the inspiration of thought and word and deed, the source of the life which rises in us toward His likeness, the hope which sustains us as we press through shadows to the light beyond. Other religions than Christianity bear witness to this, the profoundest need of the

human heart, to have a Redeemer and Lord, human and Divine, and historic and living, enthroned in the heavenlies, and dwelling in the contrite trustful soul. This is the offer of the Gospel. Such an One we have in Him, who is at once the Jesus of history, and the Christ of faith. (d) His Sovereignty. In Jesus Divine love was incarnate; and in Him has triumphed. Love is on the throne of the universe. But it is vain to lose ourselves in the vastness of His domain, the inscrutableness of His purposes, and the range of His potency. We must deal honestly by our confession of faith in the Supremacy of Jesus. He is our rightful Lord. We are His bounden servants. This is true of the Church, which has no other head, and of the soul which stands committed to crown Him Lord of all. An older theology made much of the "Mediatorial Sovereignty" of the Redeemer. The language is unfamiliar to modern ears. But His supremacy, purchased by His profound surrender, remains at once the ground of our salvation, and the condition under which it can be ours. The Church and the individual have no task which is not included in this to make Jesus King. In prayer and hymn we have professed our desire thus to establish His Sovereignty. The Word of God to us is brief and imperative. "Now, therefore, do it." (e) The Doxology. The article ends in praise. It lifts us up on wings of adoring love. It recapitulates what He is to us: Prophet, Revealer of the Father—Priest, Mediator and Propitiation—

King of kings and Lord of lords. To Him are due love that can never give too much, obedience that reckes not of great or small, but does all for Jesus' sake, adoration that hails Him "my Lord and my God."

CHAPTER X

ARTICLE VIII.—*Of the Holy Spirit.*—We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who moves upon the hearts of men to restrain them from evil and to incite them unto good, and whom the Father is ever willing to give unto all who ask Him. We believe that He has spoken by holy men of God in making known His truth to men for their salvation; that, through our exalted Saviour, He was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten men's minds in the knowledge of Christ, and to persuade and enable them to obey the call of the Gospel; and that He abides with the Church, dwelling in every believer as the spirit of truth, of power, of holiness, of comfort and of love.

1. The Biblical Idea of the Spirit. The root idea of the spirit of God, both in Old Testament and in New Testament is that of Power. The Spirit is, in fact, God, exerting power. That power is manifest in nature, and in the intellectual life of men. But its characteristic product is the moral and religious life, and specially the Christian life as such. Using the language of an ancient creed, our article describes the Spirit as "the Lord and Giver of Life." It is important to dwell on the deep and prevailing note of the Spirit's presence and operation, the infallible test of the Divine power being at work, namely, the ethical quality of the result. It was part of the Apostle Paul's great service to the Church of Christ, that he settled this problem for all time coming. Many in his day contended that certain hysterical phenomena were a sure index that the Spirit was at

work. But the sober mind of the Apostle was wholly opposed to such a conception, which indeed had nothing specifically Christian in it, and could have been matched in the "Mystery Religions," which were the forerunners and rivals of Christianity in the Græco-Roman Empire. The one indubitable mark of the Spirit is that it is the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of Christlikeness, the Spirit of holiness and love. Apart from this, physical disturbances, physical manifestations, are mere irrelevancies, have no spiritual quality belonging to them, and are dangerous to unstable souls. In view of the prevalence of certain sects, it would appear that Saint Paul's teaching and warnings would need to be considered afresh. 2. The Place of the Spirit in the Creeds. When we compare the New Testament with the creeds of the ancient Church, and when we study the sacramental system as it speedily captured the imagination of men, we note almost complete failure to do justice to the Biblical idea of the Spirit. The conception of power and of the operation of that power in the production and development of the Christian life is disappearing and a metaphysical conception is taking its place. As noted above, in relation to controversies regarding the Person of Christ, a widely prevalent idea was that He was a Divine Being of lower rank than the Father, a kind of second-grade God. In consonance with this, the Spirit tended to be viewed as a Divine Being of lower rank still. All this, of course, is mere specula-

tion controlled by Greek philosophy. Christian experience knows and adores a Saviour, who is as Divine as the Father, and is profoundly aware of a power at work in the soul, which is nothing less than Divine in the fullest sense. Hence the Church declined any formula, which made the Spirit a kind of appendix to the Godhead. When the soul surrenders to Christ, it receives the Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Jesus. This experimental fact, the theologians of the ancient Church were wont to describe by a non-scriptural technical term, to which the modern mind can attach no intelligible meaning—"procession." No doubt, the intention was to indicate what in Scripture is implied by such a word as "sending," or "pouring," i.e., an act of God imparting His Spirit, which is the Spirit of the Son, to the human spirit, to work out, in it, through it, the great design of saving love.

It is a strange and tragic fact that the great division, which separated the Eastern churches from the Latin church of the West, turned upon so abstruse a doctrine as that of the procession of the Spirit. The Roman Church desired to remove all trace of "subordinationism," by declaring that the Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son* (*filioque*). The Greeks would not accept this clause; and the breach, for which there were other causes, has remained unhealed to this day. Protestant Churches have stood with the Roman Church in this affirmation, as being theologically accurate and religiously valid. The United Church of Can-

ada joins with the Latin Church—another point of contact which is worth noting—in accepting the *filioque* clause, not certainly because it is Roman, but because it rules out a metaphysical conception of God, which has no countenance in the Bible, or in Christian experience. 3. The Work of the Holy Spirit. In one sense, it would be vain to attempt to give an account of the work of the Spirit of God. No human mind can trace the working of God in all His gracious dealings with the soul of man. Yet it is precisely in the study of such actings of the Divine upon the human spirit, that we come nearest an understanding of His ways with men. Christian experience begins with the impact of the Spirit of God. Preachers will find that in considering with their people “the work of the Holy Spirit,” which they may have eschewed because it seemed to them a remote and incomprehensible theme, they are touching the realities of life, and are awakening the very springs of Christian experience. A wide literature will give them guidance. Our article gives a brief classification of aspects of this Divine action. (1) The Spirit’s work upon the hearts of men everywhere. How comes it that men, who do not profess the Christian faith, have got what Donald Hankey called an “inarticulate” religion? Whence come the splendid virtues, which may be seen in the characters of quite non-religious men? How is it that there are good men among the adherents of non-Christian religions? The older theologians spoke of “common operations” of the

Spirit. Now if we drop the phrase, let us joyfully recognize that these qualities, which we ought to hail with admiration wherever we observe them, were not the achievement of unaided human endeavor. Wherever goodness is, God the Spirit has been at work, restraining evil impulses, begetting noble ideals, and giving strength for worthy practice. (2) The Spirit's work in the proclamation of saving truth. We hold the doctrine of the inspiration of Holy Scripture (Art II above). We affirm here a more intimate kind of inspiration, that of men raised up for the purpose of making known the will of God, and prepared for this great function by an individual communion with God, in which their spirits were subject to a dealing of the Divine Spirit, which quickened their whole being, and renewed every faculty. From such men, through such an experience, the sacred Scriptures of Christianity, in their declaration of saving truth, have come to the Church. Many criticize the Scriptures in a merely intellectualist interest, whether orthodox or heterodox. But the Scriptures will never be understood, till we "recapture" (a phrase of Glover's) the experience, of which they are at once record and product. (3) The Spirit's work in bringing men to a knowledge of need, and to a saving knowledge of Christ. The older theology spoke of "effectual calling" (see answer to Question 31, in the Westminster Assembly's "Shorter Catechism"). The language of that answer is in part reproduced here. Without trenching on the domain of psychol-

ogy, the article indicates the action of the Divine on the human as consisting in (a) Conviction, (b) Enlightenment of the mind; (c) Persuasion; (d) Enablement. (a) Before a sinful man can accept Christ as Saviour, he must be convicted of being, in fact, sinful. But the characteristic effect of sin is to dull, or even extinguish, the sense of its presence and of its issues. It needs a work of God to break through the crust of ignorance and self-righteousness, and penetrate to the secret places of man's soul, and there so confront him with himself, seen now for the first time in the light of God's holiness and love, that he will cry—"God be merciful to me a sinner!" (b) Before the sin-convicted soul can recognize the grace of God in Christ, there must be an enlightenment of the mind, leading to a discernment of the meaning and value and power of our Lord's person and work; and this process is not carried through by any intellectual faculty that man possesses. "That I may know Christ in the power of His resurrection," is the goal, not of scientific enquiry, but of a process, which goes to the very roots of our nature, and requires an absolute forsaking of self. And this process is possible only through the in-working of the Holy Spirit. The knowledge of Christ, of which Scripture speaks, and which experience confirms, is of the nature of personal acquaintance. It comes, when mists of sin and self are removed, as they can be, only by the Spirit's operation. Then we discover what He is, in His unsearchable riches, and what He has

done for us, in His exceeding love. "To know Christ," says Melancthon, "is to know His benefits." (c) Yet there is something more even than enlightenment needed. There is an action to be taken, from which the natural man shrinks, and which the paralysis of sin makes impossible. We sinners, strange as it may seem, are unwilling to do the very thing by which we are to escape from sin's guilt and power, and begin a new life of liberty. We need to be persuaded that it is the right thing to do, and that God is calling on us to do it. We must give full force to the idea of "persuasion." There is nothing coercive about it. It means that all our moral and rational powers are being brought into one line of action. The *mind* acknowledges truth, now seen for the first time. *Conscience* issues its imperative. The *will* consents. Let us set aside all analogies of external force, as of one body upon another. We are dealing with the action of spirit upon spirit; and here we are sure that the Maker of man will not violate His own creation. He will persuade; He will never coerce. (d) The last point is reached. The call of the Gospel, the voice of God, reaches the inmost sanctuary of the human soul. It finds there a being sunk in torpor, numb in every faculty, "dead in trespasses and in sins." Nothing can raise the dead but the power of God; and that power now acts. They who obey the call have been "persuaded and enabled" so to do by the Holy Spirit. But for that gracious quickening Power they had remained

for ever, inert, lifeless and unsaved. Our salvation has its source in the love of the Eternal Father, in the dying and undying love of Christ, crucified and risen, and in the Spirit, who in the depths of our spirits enables us to perceive and receive the Love of God, and to yield ourselves to its claim upon the allegiance of those for whom it was poured out to the uttermost. (4) The Work of the Spirit Within the Church. The article notes the fact—"He abides within the Church"—but does not expand the idea of this indwelling. Yet nothing could be more important for us, in this connection, than to recognize that the Church is the creation of the Spirit, and that it may be briefly defined, as "the fellowship of the Spirit." It is a community of persons, who have been united to Christ, and to one another, by the Spirit of God. Prevalent denominationalism and the modern exaggerated notion of the value of machinery, has caused this vital New Testament teaching to be relegated to obscurity. The "Acts of the Apostles" are really, as has often been remarked, "The Acts of the Holy Spirit." Various gifts of the Spirit are noted as belonging to the Church. Its public acts are attributed to the guidance of the Spirit. Its ministers and missionaries are directed by the Spirit in the exercise of their functions. The ideal set before us in the New Testament is that of a Spirit-filled Church. All else is secondary to the presence and power of the Spirit, constituting the continued life and energy of the Body of Christ.

(5) The Work of the Spirit Within the Believer. Dr. Denney has summed up the teaching of the New Testament on this subject in one memorable phrase. "In Acts, as elsewhere in the New Testament, the reception of the Spirit is the whole of Christianity." Legalism, ritualism, formalism, professionalism of every kind die down before this profound conception of the moral and religious life of man, energized, and brought to fruition by the indwelling of the Spirit of God. Hence in the New Testament we have none of the rules, regulations, and directions, common in many manuals of devotion. The life of the believer is life in the Spirit. The believer stands in such nearness to God that into him, through Jesus, the Divine life is poured as a continuous stream. And the ethical results are not ascribed to independent human abilities, but are regarded as "fruit of the Spirit." Hence, too, there are no lists of virtues, with discussion of their nature—nothing parallel to the "Nicomachean Ethics," or to the catalogues so carefully prepared by mediæval writers, and often illustrated in painting and sculpture. The Spirit is like a vital force in a living organism, endlessly productive, and endlessly varied in its manifestations. All that we get from the New Testament writers may be looked at as *examples* of what the Spirit will effect, when the soul is freely open to the operation of Divine quickening energy; and so, also, as *objects* of a holy and prayerful ambition; and so, too, as *tests* of our progress in the Divine life. In short, Christian character, with

all its excellencies, is not a manufactured article. It is the outcome of an immanent life. It is the work of the Spirit in us; and so its finest manifestations have no touch of self-consciousness about them; and its special and crowning glory is humility. Our article does not fall into the mistake of attempting a list of fruits. But it does offer indications of the directions in which we may look for manifestations of the Spirit's presence. First—*truth*; the Spirit leads to insight into Divine realities, meanings and values. Second—*power*; the Spirit inspires courage in face of difficulties, and imbues the receptive soul with strength for the work and warfare of life. Third—*holiness*; the Spirit has as goal for the Christian the whole *Imago Christi*. One taint of self or sin mars the work of the Spirit; and nothing can balance that defect, not emotions, however thrilling, not professions, however loud, not financial liberality, however large. Fourth—*comfort*. That word has wide and deep meaning in the New Testament; and the believer is encouraged to apply it fully to his need: consolation, support, upbuilding, confirmation and the like, are available for the Christian who is living in the Spirit; and, we may add, are meant to be communicated by him to others in like case with himself; for we are to be, not recipients only, but organs of the Spirit. Fifth—*love*. The spirit is the spirit of God and God is love; the spirit of Christ, and He so loved us that He gave Himself for us. Here, then, is the broadest, deepest sign of the presence of the Spirit. If the

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spirit we are of is a loving spirit; if the Apostle's great hymn of love is recognizably a portrait of us, as at least we strive to be; the inference is that there God is at work by His spirit, and that Christ is indeed being formed in us. Tolstoy's phrase, "where love is, God is," is not too penetrating or comprehensive, to describe the characteristic and crowning glory of the life that is "hid with Christ in God." Conclusion: One phrase in the body of the article would have been better placed at the close: the Father is ever willing to give the Spirit to all who ask Him. If we who are evil know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more, so runs the argument our Lord uses (Luke 11: 13) shall our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him! Set down all that we can learn of the power and work of the Divine Spirit—then reverently and believingly claim all that, and possess ourselves of it. Set down all that we have learnt of our exceeding need, and note how the power of the Spirit meets every situation into which we come—then reverently claim that supreme Gift of the Spirit, and set forth to live in the power of it. Christianity is supremely the religion of the Spirit. Only so is it a Gospel for man's "most need."

Articles IX to XIV

In Articles I to VIII we have been dealing with the great doctrines of the faith, as these are taught in Scripture and implied in Christian experience. In Articles IX to XIV we turn to the life of the believer, and contemplate its rise and progress in the soul. The following divisions may help to clearness in study and exposition.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

A. Its Source, in the Divine operation—Article IX.—Of Regeneration.

B. Its Beginning in the Individual—Article X.—Of Faith and Repentance.

C. The Standing of the Believer—Article XI.—Of Justification and Sonship.

D. Growth in Grace—Article XII.—Of Sanctification.

E. The Soul's Chief Exercise—Article XIII.—Of Prayer.

F. The Norm and Standard of Christian Living—Article XIV.—Of the Law of God.

Plainly these are topics familiar to the preacher, and need but little here in the way of elucidation and comment. Little more will be required than a brief analysis of each article, noting the method observed in dealing with its special topic.

CHAPTER X

ARTICLE IX.—*Of Regeneration.*—We believe in the necessity of regeneration, whereby we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus by the Spirit of God, who imparts spiritual life by the gracious and mysterious operation of His power, using as the ordinary means the truths of His word and the ordinances of divine appointment in ways agreeable to the nature of man.

No one can read the New Testament, and enter sympathetically into the life it depicts, without observing the thrilling note of wonder and surprise. The people, who appear in these pages, are possessed with the newness of the life they are living and of the spiritual realm they are living in. (See Denney's articles "Regeneration," in H, D, C, G.) The change they have undergone, the transition they have made, is comparable to nothing less absolute than a new birth or a new creation. It is under the former image that the origination of the Christian life is commonly contemplated in theological and devotional writings. This article, dealing with the source of the Christian life, as a new birth or regeneration, notes: (1) The Necessity of this Divine creative act. The imperative rings out, addressed to the conscience of every man—"Ye must be born again." And the conscience, unless it has been seared by self-righteousness, or sophisticated by a shallow dogmatism, acknowledges the impact of the truth. We mortal men live under a law of moral continuity, from which there is no

deliverance by any effort of ours. We cannot wrench ourselves free. We cannot throw off the burden by any dead lift. We cannot enter into life, lying as we do under a moral paralysis. A change must take place within us, before the life of God can begin in us. In this matter we are not creators, but recipients. The spiritual life, like the natural, is a Divine creative act. (2) The Power that alone is adequate. How can a change so radical, so complete, reaching to the depths of our spiritual life, and extending to its further manifestations in character, be brought about? How does the creative force act? Certain answers need not detain us. "Baptismal regeneration," the idea that a physical act can produce this profound mystery of a new life in the soul, is a mere trifling with the subject. The contribution of Nicodemus to the subject is scarcely wiser—let there be an intellectual influence, a teaching, an education, and the new life will come in. The roots of religion are not in the intellect. As it has been put—"Educate," says Nicodemus; "Regenerate" is the word of Jesus. This brings us back to the point—How? What the power? How does it act? It is Nicodemus' question; the answer lies in the reply of Jesus.

(a) There is a power that can effect even so great a change as this. It is the power of the Spirit of God. To Jesus, as to the prophets of the Old Testament, the Spirit is not conceived statically, or emotionally, but dynamically. The Spirit *is* power, the very power of God, working creatively. All the

power of God is needed to make a man a Christian. All Christian souls make this confession. (b) This power is competent to do the impossible. From the flesh nothing can be born but flesh. The Spirit and He alone, is competent to create the spiritual life in the Soul. (c) The Spirit, as Power, is mysterious in itself and in its operation. Its analogy in nature is the wind, of which it is impossible to tell "whence it cometh and whither it goeth." "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." The Christian is a man wondered at. The Christian character is the reverse of commonplace. It is full of surprising possibilities, extraordinary achievements, depths and heights which those, who live at the world's level, know nothing of. (d) The operation of the Spirit while mysterious, is not magical. It is discernible, and its nature is known, in the effects it produces. The wind is mysterious, blowing where it listeth, but we do hear the sound thereof. Tenfold more mysterious is the power of God in the regeneration of the soul. But we do know what it works, in the Church at large, and in the lives and characters of individuals. Church history and Christian biography are full of moral and religious effects, of which we can say nothing else than, "See what God hath wrought! This is a new creation—a birth from above." (3) The Means commonly employed. Mysterious, but not magical. God is not a conjurer, though His work is beyond the compass of our intelligence. He does not invade, or overwhelm, or crush, the human nature that He has made in His

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own image. That nature lies open to His influence. The powers, gifts, capacities, susceptibilities, are appealed to, touched, quickened by the Spirit of God, according to their place and function in the whole spiritual organism. It is obviously impossible to enumerate the ways or stereotype the methods which God follows in dealing with soul after soul. Records, questionnaires, etc., reveal endless diversity. Literature abounds, and is usually instructive. The pastor should compile records, for his private use, out of the many cases that arise in his cure of souls. But, broadly, there are two outstanding means which God deviseth, that His banished be not expelled from Him. The one is His Word, and the other is the ordinances of His own appointment. If the records could be compiled, there is no doubt the ascertained result would be that, in the vast majority of cases, the Spirit had used, as means for his gracious operation some portion of Scripture, or some season of Christian fellowship and worship.

Whatever the specific mode of the Spirit's working may be, the outcome is before us—a "new creation in Christ Jesus." A man new made! He in Christ, and Christ in him; living from a new centre, with new energies, to new consummations.

CHAPTER XI

ARTICLE X.—*Of Faith and Repentance.*—We believe that faith in Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive Him, trust in Him and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered to us in the Gospel, and that this saving faith is always accompanied by repentance, wherein we confess and forsake our sins with full purpose of and endeavor after a new obedience to God.

In considering the beginning of the new life in the soul, we must be careful not to draw an unreal distinction between the Divine and human aspects of the great experience. The Divine aspect is Regeneration, the spirit of God working beneath the levels of consciousness. But it would be mere superstition to suppose that there could be a work of God on or in the human spirit that left it passive and inactive. The Divine action evokes the human action. Regeneration as a Divine operation has, as its equivalent in the activity of the human spirit, Faith and Repentance. To speak of Regeneration, as something separable from faith and repentance, is to deceive ourselves with words. Regeneration, as known in experience, consists in Faith and Repentance. These two must never be separated. They constitute one action, in which, to use old familiar phrases, a sinful man receives Christ as his Saviour, or gives himself to Jesus. It is one action; but it may be considered from the point of view of that *to which* or rather of Him, *to whom* the sinner moves in surrender and dedication, or from the

point of view of that *from which* the sinner turns with an energy of definite abandonment. Spiritually inseparable, faith and repentance must always be preached together. A faith, that did not include repentance, might easily become unethical, intellectualist or emotional. A repentance, that did not include faith, might easily become legal, hard, distrustful, bitter, and would probably not realize at its real magnitude, the sin and need of man.

(1) Faith. In one sense, Christianity is Christ, not any dogma about Him, but simply Himself, the historic and living Lord, making His own appeal, His own claim, His own promise. In another sense, it may be said that Christianity is Faith. It is that attitude and action which is the full and proper response of the human spirit, to this Christ, who is the revelation and the vehicle of Divine redeeming love. The exercise of faith may be described in various ways. Fewest words are best, and these the simplest. In Christ, the infinite love of God is offered freely to man. In faith, man makes the only possible response (unless he definitely refuse the gift) namely, he receives the love, and yields himself absolutely to it; he receives Christ, and gives himself to Him. The verbs used in the Article, echoing the Shorter Catechism, are *receive, trust, rest*. Any words will do, if they carry out the idea of that double giving and receiving, which is the heart of Christian experience: Christ gives Himself for us and to us, and receives us to Himself; we give ourselves to Him and for Him. On the one hand, Christ in His

fulness; on the other hand, man both in his powers and his need; and between these a mutual pledge, made on each side, in uttermost loyalty, and sealed by the gift of the Spirit. This is the "great salvation" offered in the Gospel, not a thing, but a Person, and a living fellowship with Him. Too often has evangelism made salvation turn on a dogma, to be assented to by the intellect. Salvation goes far deeper than the intellect. It is realized in that act in which we admit Christ to our hearts in His redeeming sovereignty as our Lord and Master, and commit ourselves to Him, "unreservedly, unconditionally and for ever." This faith is, indeed, a "saving grace"; and to the exercise of it we are "persuaded and enabled" by the Holy Spirit. But it is worthy of remark, in passing, that we must not so present faith that it is, as it were, a substitute for Christ. "Jesus saves"; and "faith saves," only because in it we apprehend Christ. Hence, in time of doubt, when we scarce know whether we are Christians or not, our hearts are reassured less by thinking about our faith, than by contemplating Christ as Saviour, and letting the constraint of His love bind us to a new surrender and a more confident reliance. (2) Repentance. Saving faith has, as its invariable concomitant, the grace of repentance, the two being inseparable. The description of repentance given in the article has another echo of the Shorter Catechism. (a) Oddly, and yet significantly, it puts confession of sin first. No doubt the intention is to note that sin is felt most deeply

when the soul stands before God whom we have grieved by our sin, and whose redeeming love compels even a hardened sinner to know his unworthiness. We feel that, whatever the form of our sin, its darkest and worst feature is that it is trespass against the holy love of God. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned," is the agonized and yet not despairing utterance of the awakened and penitent soul. (b) The second element in a true repentance is the forsaking of sin, and of all sins, the determination to be done with sin, as the darkest, deadliest thing in the universe. This is an act of will; but it can scarcely be performed without a great stirring of heart, grief that we should so have grieved God, and hatred of the thing that has wrought such woe in us and in the world. (c) The third element is the resolution that our habit of sinning shall be replaced by a "new obedience to God." It will be new in motive and aim, not the legal obedience, which serves slavishly, but the obedience which serves the heavenly Father with filial confidence and joy; an obedience, therefore, which is never itself our ground of confidence, being, as it is, itself the outcome of God's good Spirit working in us. But, though the enabling power is God's, obedience is none the less the act, the duty, the responsibility of man. Therefore, the new obedience requires on our part a "purpose" full and sincere, and an "endeavor," strenuous and unremitting. Two remarks may be added. First, repentance is indispensable to forgiveness. It is not the ground of

forgiveness; but, as has been said, it is "of such necessity to sinners that none may expect pardon without it." Second, repentance is followed by forgiveness. As it has been put, "There is no sin so small, but it deserves judgment—no sin so great that it can bring judgment upon those who truly repent."

Take these two together, Faith and Repentance—for indeed they are one and they are comparable to death and resurrection. Read carefully Rom. 6: 11; 2 Cor. 5: 14; Col. 3: 1-3. The Christian life is spiritually and really a dying and rising again. And the life to which the Christian rises is not an individual achievement or possession. It is his in union with Christ. He lives, and yet in the most glorious sense, it is not he, the frail mortal who lives, it is Christ that lives in him. Christ is his life. He has died. He lives a life, of which the world has not understanding, a hidden life, "hid with Christ in God."

CHAPTER XII

ARTICLE XI.—*Of Justification and Sonship.*—We believe that God, on the sole ground of the perfect obedience and sacrifice of Christ, pardons those who by faith receive Him as their Saviour and Lord, accepts them as righteous and bestows upon them the adoption of sons, with a right to all the privileges therein implied, including a conscious assurance of their sonship.

The Christian is a new creation; and for him, in the vast transition from sin to salvation, all things are become new. In this article, two things that have become new are mentioned, each of which covers a world of new and blessed experiences. (1) A New Standing before God. Sin no longer acts as a barrier. No longer does it fill the soul with guilty fears, keeping it in bondage. The love of God has dealt effectively and finally with sin. Its condemnation is removed. Its power is broken. The conscience is cleansed. Peace is made; peace is inbreathed. All this is God's act. "There is forgiveness with thee." On God's part the forgiveness is infinitely costly. For man, it is absolutely free. The cry of the sinful is "Pardon mine iniquity, for *it is great!*" (How strange a reason!) The answer of God is swift, as though He had been waiting to be gracious, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Now this greatest of all wonders, this profoundest of all experiences, receives in theology the technical term "justification"; and, in a few closely-packed clauses, the article gives the outline of the Reforma-

tion doctrine of Justification by faith, as follows: (a) The ground of our justification, not the good works which we are enabled to do through God's grace assisting us, but the one great work of Christ, including both His "perfect obedience," and His "sacrifice," both of which were for us. (b) Its condition, not anything by which we could supplement the saving work of Christ, but the faith that receives Him as Saviour and Lord. (c) Its nature, twofold. First, "pardon," the removal of the guilt of sin. Second, "Acceptance." God can receive nothing into communion with Himself that is unholy. If He accepts us, it is because our real life is one with Christ. Not by a legal fiction does He accept us as righteous. The righteousness of Christ is genuinely ours, because He Himself is ours, and we His, in a living union. That this is So, was the discovery that Bunyan made, and that turned His darkness into light. "Now Christ was all; all my righteousness, all my sanctification, and all my redemption." The doctrine is often stated in a hard legal form. It can only be appreciated, when we translate it into terms of personal relationships, and consider the union which exists between our Lord and ourselves, and between Him and the Father. (2) A New Relation to God. Those, who have been thus received and forgiven, stand to God in the relation of sons. It is true that God is our Creator, and we as the highest of His creatures, may not unfittingly be termed sons of God. But that is not the deepest sense of the phrase. Our sins

have separated us from God, and sonship has ceased to have a religious experimental meaning for us. But what we lost, we have regained through Christ, and is now ours in Him. This is the glorious fact, which fills Paul and John with joy and wonder. We who were self-exiled, are now taken into the family. The Father has bestowed on us the tender title of His children, and such we are! We have received the "Spirit of adoption," and from our lips flows the child's name of God, "Abba, Father!" As children of God, there is nothing that it is not ours in Christ. Unsearchable riches are ours. All things are ours. If children, then heirs; Heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Since this is so, it would be incredible, if we were not meant to know it. Sins into which we fall will cloud our souls. Disciplinary fears may beset us. But they who are children of God in Christ have it as their right and duty to live in full "assurance of their sonship."

CHAPTER XIII

ARTICLE XII.—*Of Sanctification*.—We believe that those who are regenerated and justified grow in the likeness of Christ through fellowship with Him, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and obedience to the truth; that a holy life is the fruit and evidence of saving faith; and that the believer's hope of continuance in such a life is in the preserving grace of God. And we believe that in this growth in grace Christians may attain that maturity and full assurance of faith whereby the love of God is made perfect in us.

To have given ourselves to Jesus, to be His, to be "in Him," is a state or a standing; but it is also a starting-point, the opening of a great career. It is good to look back, and ask if we did really enter on it. It is better to consider whether we are now in the way, and how far we have got on our way. Sanctification, accordingly, is not an addendum to the Christian life; it is in reality that life itself, viewed as progress from a starting-point to a goal. It is impossible, without grave spiritual danger, to be preoccupied with forgiveness, and to leave holiness to later consideration. As impossible would it be, without making shipwreck of our hopes, to be interested in holiness, and to labor for it, while leaving unanswered the question as to our forgiveness and our sonship.

The article, then, deals with the deepening and development of the new life. (1) The goal of the Christian life. This is defined briefly as "the likeness of Christ." In this matter, the Christian

is not permitted an option. He may not decline Christlikeness, and declare that less will satisfy him. "Enough for him to be a good citizen and live a fairly decent life, etc.! Let others, *unco guid*, make a specialty of holiness!" To speak thus is to betray profound ignorance. A Christian's life is rooted in Christ, and can have nothing short of Christlikeness as its issue. To decline that issue, is to rule himself outside of the Christian fellowship. The Christian, as such, is committed to Christlikeness, as the be-all and end-all of his whole Christian life. The likeness of Christ is there, in the Gospel page. That likeness is to be stamped on the character of the Christian, recognizably so even in this life, to be perfected hereafter, when we see Him as He is, and shall then be like Him. (2) Progress to this Goal. This is described in the New Testament as of the nature of growth, and is so designated in this article. The Christian character is not a manufactured article. It is the product of life, a result, the special result, of "the indwelling of the Holy Spirit." The Old Testament has caught the idea—"he shall grow as the lily." And our Lord, looking on the same lovely outcome of a hidden life, calls attention to it, pointing out that lilies neither toil nor spin; they simply grow. (See a valuable chapter on "The Law of the Lily," in Mrs. Herman's beautiful book, "The Secret Garden of the Soul.") Thus the soul grows, spontaneously, unconsciously, through the presence within it of the very life of God Himself. (3) The conditions of

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Progress. It is strange that, while growth in the spiritual life is described as fact or law, it is also described as a duty—"Grow in grace." Of course, we are not responsible for the power by which we grow; that is supplied by God. Nor are we responsible for the conditions and circumstances, amid which the growth takes place, and by which it is fostered and increased. These are ordered by the love and wisdom of God. Yet we are not unconscious like the flowers. We are conscious and responsible personalities. We have a very definite responsibility by the life that is God's gift to us. There are conditions, which we are called on to supply, God's grace enabling us to fulfil them. Three are noted in the article. *First*, faith. Faith is what old writers called the instrumental cause of salvation, including justification and sanctification. Unthinking Christians have not always remembered this. They were willing to allow that they were *justified* by faith; but they clung to the conviction that they must be *sanctified* by their own independent exertions! And a very poor job they made of it! In answer to such ignorant pretensions, Marshall wrote his great classic—"The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification." A later generation saw the rise of the "Keswick School," to emphasize this almost forgotten truth, that holiness is by faith, as much as justification is. *Second*, fellowship with Christ. So, Christ ordained Twelve that they should be "With Him." That companionship with Christ, as lovely as we picture it in the fields

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of Galilee, is to be realized even more intimately now, as the Spirit takes the things of Christ, and shows them to us. Keep close. Let not sin drive a wedge between. In a daily fellowship of prayer and meditation, as we gaze on the face of our Master and Friend, we shall grow into His likeness. *Third*, obedience. The truth of God is not for fruitless discussion, but for practical accomplishment. It is to be done, not merely learned. Every duty, conscientiously performed, has a reflex action on ourselves, and the likeness of Christ becomes more definite. (4) The evidential value of growth. Holiness, Christlikeness, is the characteristic fruit of faith, as just emphasized. Therefore, also, it is the best, and ultimately the only, evidence that faith is present and in exercise. The question, have we a saving interest in Christ? is to be answered by pressing this other question, "are we growing in the likeness of Christ?" If there is life, there is growth. If there is no growth, decay has set in, and death is inevitable. (5) Our Hope of Reaching the Goal. There is one only, and that is the keeping power of God. This is not a physical force exerted upon matter. It is the Divine Spirit acting on the human spirit, with all the power of omnipotence in it, under condition of simple trust in the Redeemer. The "Perseverance of Saints" has sometimes been travestied, as though a soul could be saved, irrespective of the exercise of a living faith. This is, of course, dangerous nonsense. The "perseverance of saints" rests on the bedrock of the faithfulness of

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God. What is committed to Him, He will keep. Without this confidence, life, with its trials and temptations, would be too perilous an enterprize; death with its darkness and anguish would be an unendurable terror. (6) The Possibilities of Experience. In plain words, these are boundless. The riches of Christ cannot be tracked to their termination. There is always a beyond, for faith to explore and appropriate. It is a vast pity that a truth like this, so inspiring, should have been thrown into the arena of debate, for bad-tempered theologians to wrangle over. Perfection is impossible, cry some; and debar the soul from hopes of victory. Perfection is possible, affirm others, adding "we ourselves have lived so many days without conscious sin." Neither party has considered what scripture means when it applies the epithet "perfect" to believers. It certainly does not mean "sinlessness." It means "maturity," as compared with a stage far earlier, where ignorance and inexperience prevail. The stage of maturity may be reached by those who are making progress in the Divine life. Those, who grow, may become mature. The Signs, that a soul is reaching such a stage, are two. *First*, a faith that makes a full surrender, and gains a full assurance. *Second*, a love which owns absolutely the constraint of the love of Christ, dies utterly to self, is not a mere passing emotion, but is, in very deed, "the love of God, shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given into us."

CHAPTER XIV

ARTICLE XIII.—*Of Prayer.*—We believe that we are encouraged to draw near to God, our Heavenly Father, in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and on our own behalf and that of others to pour out our hearts humbly yet freely before Him, as becomes His beloved children, giving Him the honor and praise due His holy name, asking Him to glorify Himself on earth as in heaven, confessing unto Him our sins and seeking of Him every gift needful for this life and for our everlasting salvation. We believe also that, inasmuch as all true prayer is prompted by His Spirit, He will in response thereto grant us every blessing according to His unsearchable wisdom and the riches of His grace in Jesus Christ.

This great topic is handled in this article, wholly from the point of view of experience. Technical points of Dogmatic or Apologetic are not touched on. (Guidance on the whole subject, with copious bibliography, may be had from the late Dr. Hastings in his book on prayer, in the series of volumes entitled "Great Christian Doctrines.") The aspects, under which the exercise of prayer is considered in the article are: (1) Our warrant for prayer. We draw near to God, because He is our "heavenly Father." "I bow my knees," says Saint Paul, "unto the Father." And Jesus uses a simple yet mighty argument to encourage our hearts in prayer—"How much more shall your heavenly Father!" How much more beneficently, wisely, liberally! (2) Our plea in prayer. We sinners dare draw near to the Holy Father, because His father-love has been manifested in all its reconciling sin-forgiving quality

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in Jesus Christ, His Son, in whom we also are children of God. Not in our name, therefore, but in His, we come, sure that nothing can bar our "access to the Father." (3) The prompting and the power of prayer. We are not left to ourselves when we pray. Prayer is an activity of the Divine life in us. We pray in the Spirit. Through Christ, in the Spirit, we have our access. And as we pour out our hearts before God, it is the Spirit, who helps our infirmities, and replaces our ignorance, and in the deep places of our souls, where no human friend dare enter, "the spirit itself maketh intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered." (4) The qualities of Prayer. (a) Humility, as of frail sinful creatures, addressing the Creator the Holy one, making no claim for themselves, casting themselves on the mercy of God in Christ. (b) Filial confidence, as of those, who are not trembling slaves, but children, beloved of the Father, and glad to tell Him all that is in their hearts, not afraid that He will misunderstand them, or reject them. (5) The Parts of Prayer. These are not named, but are implied (a) Adoration, with which the reverent worshipper instinctively begins. (b) Confession of sins, which naturally follows, as the soul sees itself in the light of the Divine holiness. (c) Petition, which flows from a sense of need, in things temporal and things spiritual. (d) Intercession, which is the highest work of prayer, and is the proper exercise of the priesthood which belongs to all believers. We are to pray not only on our own behalf, but on

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behalf of others; and the scope of our desire is the glorifying of the Father by every human soul the world over. (e) Thanksgiving, which is a part of every believing prayer, for faith rejoices in the munificence of God. (6) Answer to Prayer. There are many reflex benefits, which come from prayer, and make the exercise of prayer very precious. But it is remarkable, as Dr. Hastings points out, that our Lord's emphasis falls on the assurance that the prayer of faith will be answered. His assurances, indeed, are staggeringly comprehensive (Gordon's "Quiet Thoughts on Prayer" is very full on this point). In truth, the Father gives us "good things" according to His wisdom and love; and perhaps not the least blessing is His withholding of things we were sure were "good," and ignorantly demanded. We cannot dictate to God. We cannot limit Him. Strictly speaking, there are no unanswered prayers, though the answer may be far beyond, and far other than, what we expected.

CHAPTER XV

ARTICLE XIV.—*Of the Law of God.*—We believe that the moral law of God, summarized in the Ten Commandments, testified to by the prophets and unfolded in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, stands forever in truth and equity, and is not made void by faith, but on the contrary is established thereby. We believe that God requires of every man to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God; and that only through this harmony with the will of God shall be fulfilled that brotherhood of man wherein the Kingdom of God is to be made manifest.

The charge of antinomianism has been brought against evangelical religion from the days of the Apostle Paul downwards. He himself made short work of these charges. Read Romans 3: 31; and 6: 1, 2. This article does little more than echo the Apostle's indignant denial of so base a charge. *First*, it states what is meant in Christianity by the law of God. It is the whole will of God regarding the moral life of man. The Law, thus understood, is not contained in a code book. It is to be sought in the revelation of God's holy will, contained in the Old Testament, summarized in the "Ten Words," and expounded in the ethical monotheism of the Prophets. It is to be found, in its supreme expression, in the character, and example, as well as in the ethical teaching of Jesus. This holy law of God is not made void by faith. On the contrary, only faith, directed to Jesus Christ, Redeemer and Lord, can appreciate the glory of the Law, and bind it on

the human conscience as a perpetual obligation. *Second*, the article seeks to impress on the mind of the reader the imperative of the law, by quoting a well-known passage, which sums up the whole matter as set forth in the Old Testament. The duty of man as a moral agent is to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God. (By what must surely have been an oversight, the article does not refer to our Lord's summary of the law, as contained in Love, love to God, and to our neighbor. Nor does it quote, what here would have been most relevant, Paul's aphorism, "love is the fulfilling of the Law.") *Third*, the article notes the issue of such fulfilling of the Law. By it, the Kingdom of God comes in power, that Kingdom, which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, whose special manifestation will be the prevalence of the spirit of love, and the organizing of humanity into a true brotherhood. N.B.—While the Christian religion honors the law of God, and is ethical through and through, it is not a legal religion, nor is it a mere system of ethics. It is to its core a religion of redemption. It sees in Jesus Christ the revelation of the highest moral values, and the warrant of their reality and triumph. It directs sinful men to the Saviour, that, through faith in Him, guilt may be removed, failures amended, a new life begun of moral endeavor, which, through God's grace, will be crowned with victory.

CHAPTER XVI

ARTICLE XV.—*Of the Church.*—We acknowledge one holy Catholic Church, the innumerable company of saints of every age and nation, who being united by the Holy Spirit to Christ their Head are one body in Him and have communion with their Lord and with one another. Further, we receive it as the will of Christ that His Church on earth should exist as a visible and sacred brotherhood, consisting of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, together with their children, and other baptized children, and organized for the confession of His name, for the public worship of God, for the administration of the sacraments, for the upbuilding of the saints, and for the universal propagation of the Gospel; and we acknowledge as a part, more or less pure, of this universal brotherhood, every particular Church throughout the world which professes this faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him as divine Lord and Saviour.

The circumstances that attended the Reformation in the sixteenth century made it necessary that those, who rejected the Papacy, should make clear to themselves what they meant by the Church of Christ. Hence the creeds of the Reformation Churches are careful to deal with this great and vital subject. The Scottish Confession of 1560 has a very noble article on the church; and to Scottish Christians in the centuries following, the church with its ordinances has held a central place in thought and action. (Reference here may be made to Dr. Lindsay's "History of the Reformation," Book II, Chapter VIII, par. 6.) Our own situation in Canada is parallel, in some respects, to that of the Reformers in the sixteenth century. We are face

to face with the church of Rome, of whose inner life, as seen in her great saints, as well as in multitudes of her members, we speak with sympathy and admiration; whose polity, however, we regard as unscriptural, and as exerting political influences of a sinister kind; while some of her tenets, and much of her cultus, we reject as inconsistent with the Gospel of God's grace in Christ. At the same time, we lament what has been called the "fissiparous" nature of Protestantism, and watch with dismay the multitude of sects, each with its own shibboleths, renouncing fellowship with other so-called "denominations," and filling the land with strife and debate, while the work of evangelism suffers loss, and the church of Rome looks on with a smile of conscious superiority. In this article, the inspiring element is the sense of the gravity, and even peril, of the situation, and the desire to occupy solid Reformation ground. (1) The opening sentence echoes the Reformation doctrine. Dr. Lindsay's careful statement may be helpful here. "The Church of Christ is a body of which the spirit of Jesus is the soul. It is a company of Christlike men and women, whom the Holy Spirit has called, enlightened, and sanctified through the preaching of the Word; who are encouraged to look forward to a glorious future prepared for the people of God; and who, meanwhile, manifest their faith in all manner of loving services done to their fellow-believers." The Church in this aspect is at once invisible and universal. It matters not what name Christians are known by, or what

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“denomination” they belong to, they have fellowship with Christ. They constitute His Temple, His Body, His Bride. They are one in Him, with a unity which underlies all differences of creed, cultus, and polity. (2) The Church, however, is meant to be made visible. By what means shall it be made so? How shall any group of professed believers be known, in their corporate capacity, as part of the Body of Christ? The answer of the church of Rome is quite simple. That is the true church which holds by the Pope as its earthly Head. The only trouble about this answer is that it is quite unscriptural, and quite unhistorical. In reply to Rome, and in statement of their own position, the Reformers maintained that the Church is visible, and “can be seen wherever the Word of God is faithfully proclaimed, and wherever faith is manifested in testimony and bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit.” The article in its second sentence states this doctrine of the visible Church, developing it in three directions, (a) The membership of the Church. These are adult believers, who make profession of faith and loyalty to Him. Children also are members of the Church, who are born into Christian homes, or are under Christian guardianship, and are brought to receive the outward sign of membership in the sacrament of baptism. (b) The Functions of the Church. These are here defined: 1. The Confession of Christ’s Name, as Saviour and Lord; a confession which will include Creed, preaching, and personal witness. 2. Public

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Worship. We can never get away from the idea of the Church as a fellowship. Its actions are those of the whole body of believers acting together. The worship of God, accordingly, is not adequately rendered by individuals, acting separately. It is properly rendered by the members acting as one body, and only adequately rendered, when all the members are together with one accord in one place, according as the local conditions make this possible.

3. The administration of the Sacraments. Public Worship reaches the height of its spiritual value, as glorifying to God, and as beneficial to the Church, in its sacramental actions. Where these are omitted, there may be a humanly instituted and organized society, but there is not a church. The "Society of Friends," for instance, is a very noble society; but, under historic conditions, which make the action of the founders intelligible, it has rejected Sacramental worship, and is confessedly not a church. Within the Christian fellowship, it is certain that the administration of the Sacraments, with due instruction as to their meaning and value, and due attention to the reverence, and beauty of their celebration, is indispensable to the cultivation of the inner life of the members, and to the vitality of the whole body.

4. The Upbuilding of the Saints. This includes all means that may fitly be employed for the nurture of souls, the development of Christian character, and equipment for service. But along with these, and deeper than these, is the influence of one member upon another. It may be

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doubted whether the modern church has not erred more in this connection than in any other. Congregations tend to be mobs rather than organisms. But in truth, the name "Church" ought not to be borne by any group that is little more than a social club. The church is bound to fail, whose definite aim is not the deepening and development of the Christian life, the education of its members in the knowledge of God, and their preparation for witness and work and warfare. 5. The propagation of the Gospel. Christianity regards all sincere religion with respect and sympathy. In bringing the Gospel to adherents of other faiths, it has no thought of superiority, as though Christians belonged to a higher grade. But it does believe that Christ is the revelation of the Father, that He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and that in the likeness of Christ all men everywhere will attain the fulness of spiritual maturity. We believe in a Universal Christ, and we would stultify ourselves, and deeply wound the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, if we did not make Him known, in every field, where we can reach our fellow men, of our own race, or of other races. Such work is the plain duty of all to whom Christ is precious. The fulfilment of it, under the guidance of the indwelling Spirit, is the chief method of filling the earth with the knowledge of God in His redeeming love, and is at the same time indispensable to the increase of the home church in manifold reflex benefits. A non-missionary church will die, spite of wealth or orthodoxy. A

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missionary church will live, spite of grave defects in doctrine; which helps to explain the vitality of the church of Rome, and the moribund conditions of sects, which claim high intellectual distinction, but have neglected the missionary obligation.

(c) Particular Churches. The Reformers were strong in their assertion of their catholicity, holding, as they did, the catholic Faith, which they were careful to embody in their creeds. But they rejected entirely the Roman idea that throughout the whole world the church must have but one form and shape. The church universal was represented, according to their view, by "particular churches," which existed in different nations. Such churches might differ widely in matters of administration; but so long as they retained the essential things, the preaching of the word, the due administration of the sacraments and the practice of church discipline, they were integral parts of the one, visible, Catholic, church of Christ.

Our article, in its closing sentence, adheres to this position of the Reformers. The United Church of Canada seeks the union of a true spiritual fellowship with every church, which holds to Christ as the only Saviour and Lord, the only King and Head of His Church. The Reformation ideal was, no doubt, a group of national churches, with full intercommunion. "The French, the Scottish and the Dutch churches had all their own creeds, and all believed each other to be parts of the same One Catholic Church of Christ." That ideal was broken

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in the controversies of the seventeenth century. Whether this ideal can be realized under modern conditions is the ecclesiastical problem of the present day. It never can, as long as "denominations" are ranged against one another in stupid, fratricidal competition.

CHAPTER XVII

ARTICLE XVI.—*Of the Sacraments.*—We acknowledge two sacraments. Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which were instituted by Christ, to be of perpetual obligation as signs and seals of the covenant ratified in His precious blood, as means of grace, by which, working in us, He doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and comfort our faith in Him, and as ordinances through the observance of which His Church is to confess her Lord and be visibly distinguished from the rest of the world.

(1) Baptism with water into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is the sacrament by which are signified and sealed our union to Christ and participation in the blessings of the new covenant. The proper subjects of baptism are believers, and infants presented by their parents or guardians in the Christian faith. In the latter case the parents or guardians should train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and should expect that their children will, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, receive the benefits which the sacrament is designed and fitted to convey. The Church is under the most solemn obligation to provide for their Christian instruction.

(2) The Lord's Supper is the sacrament of communion with Christ and with His people, in which bread and wine are given and received in thankful remembrance of Him and His sacrifice on the cross; and they who in faith receive the same do, after a spiritual manner, partake of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to their comfort, nourishment and growth in grace. All may be admitted to the Lord's Supper who make a credible profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and of obedience to His law.

In an introductory sentence, this article deals with the considerations which apply to both sacraments. (a) Their number. The Roman Catholic system reckons seven sacraments, corresponding to the stages at which from birth to death, a human being

requires grace to be "infused" into him, through certain rites, celebrated by a mediating priesthood. The Reformers reading the New Testament, and taking it as their only authority, rejected the whole sacerdotal system; and reckoned only two ordinances as of Sacramental importance, one connected with entrance into the Christian fellowship, and the other with the maintenance of life within it. (b) Their institution. The Reformers set aside tradition, and went to the fountain head, the authority of Christ the Head of the Church, and found there, warranted by His Word, the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, in a class apart, no other rite or ceremony having the same warrant, or the same sacramental rank. (c) Their meaning and value. Both sacraments are related to the saving work of Christ, and to the Covenant, or relation between God and His people, made in the pouring out of His love and life upon the Cross, so that the redeemed see the cost and the security of their salvation, not in anything they can offer, but in "the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Of the great salvation accomplished by the work of Christ, the sum and substance is Himself, the living Saviour and Lord, who communicates to us the benefits of His Cross and Passion by the dealing of His Spirit. The sacraments, accordingly, are to be interpreted by reference to the Covenant, or the Salvation, or more simply Christ Himself and His benefits, the "all things" which are ours in Him.

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I. They are signs, or pictorial presentations, or typical illustrations, of the very simplest kind, designed to bring to mind the reality and the preciousness of what Christ has wrought for us.

II. They are seals, appended to the Word of God, the Word of promise, attesting it, as His solemn pledge, that He will be to His believing people all that is contained in the Gospel of His grace.

III. They are appointed means, whereby His grace is, on the one hand, communicated to us in all its saving power, and, on the other, is apprehended and appropriated by humble and adoring faith. It might be put more simply still. In the Sacrament, Christ comes definitely and really for the reception of the believing heart, and the believer does definitely and really hold communion with the living Lord, and does really and truly and fully receive Him to "dwell in His heart by faith." The doctrine of transubstantiation is sometimes described as "high." The Protestant claim is that the truly "high" doctrine is that of the Reformers, namely, that in the Sacraments, Christ is Himself present in the completeness of His Person and the fulness of His work, and may be received by faith, so that between the believer and Him a union is renewed, than which none closer can be conceived. It is He, in the ordinance, who carries out His loving design in its institution, quickening, strengthening and comforting us, as we have faith in Him.

IV. Testimonies to a non-Christian world, that the Church stands true to her Head, and publicly separates herself from all that dishonors Him, and solemnly commits herself afresh to a life of loyalty. In this aspect, a Sacrament is indeed, a *Sacramentum*, a soldier's oath of fealty to his sovereign and his flag. Two paragraphs follow dealing with each sacrament respectively.

(1) Baptism. (a) Its meaning. It is the rite, in which is set forth, the believer's entrance into the new life, and the beginning of his participation in those benefits which are his by purchase and by promise. (b) Its subjects. It would be absurd and even blasphemous to confer this privilege upon any who, being capable of it, had declined to make profession of their faith in Christ, and to dedicate themselves to Him in a life-long obedience. (In foreign mission work, baptism is sometimes conferred upon non-Christians, who come, in a "mass movement," desiring to enter the Church. Missionaries must be the judges of the sincerity of applicants, whose ignorance and immaturity are necessarily very great.) The Reformers had before them the practice of infant baptism. The theory that lay behind this practice, they could not accept, namely, that baptism is essential to salvation, and that children dying unbaptized, are in Hell, not, indeed, in the place of woe, but in that part of the nether regions known as "limbo." Yet they deliberately continued the practice. They did so, because they were not individualists in their

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doctrine of the Church. They held that the Church was not an aggregate of loosely-related individuals. They held the family in high regard, as a holy institution of Divine appointment. The unit from which the Church originates, under normal conditions, and from which in all generations it derives its strength, is the Christian home, the family circle where Jesus is known and loved, and children are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Following the Reformers, The United Church continues the practice, and bases it on the same principle.

By so doing, the Church is bound to seek by all possible means, the following conditions, apart from which the baptism of young children is a meaningless ceremony. *First*, the parents or guardians must themselves be professors of the Christian faith, and members of the Christian fellowship. Only so, can their presentation of their children for baptism be anything else than a fragment of pre-reformation superstition. *Second*, the family must be so ordered that the children shall grow up to trust and love the Saviour. Then, by the operation of the Spirit, they will consciously accept the Baptismal pledge, and enter on possession of the Baptismal blessing, a sign and seal and application of the benefits of Christ. *Third*, Christian instruction must be secured for the children, both within and beyond the inner circle of the family. In the present day, the Christian conception of the family is threatened. If Christian homes cease to abound

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among us, not only the Church, but civilization itself will lose its only sure basis. In continuing the practice of infant Baptism, The United Church is standing for the sanctity of the Christian home, and is setting on its loveliest members the outward attestation of the privilege, which is theirs in Christ.

(2) The Lord's Supper. (a) Its Meaning. It is in a special and high degree the festival of the fellowship. In it there is a real communion with the unseen, but present, Lord, and with those who are one in Him. It is, therefore, emphatically, the Lord's Table. The visible Church has no right to confine its blessings to a section of the Lord's people. The action of the Church of Rome in denying access to the Sacrament to all but its own members, is intelligible and even justifiable on the Roman claim to be the whole and sole Catholic Church. For non-Roman Churches to proceed in the same manner, is not only wrong; it is ridiculous. (b) The Action. This (Latin, *actio*) is the Reformation descriptive designation of the ritual. It is, in fact, a feast reduced to its simplest elements, namely, giving and receiving. Its symbolism is also very simple. What is given is, in reality, Christ Himself, once crucified for us, now risen and present and offering Himself in His saving power to every trustful soul. This gift of Christ is symbolized in Bread and Wine, forming as these did, in the time when believers first gathered round the Holy Table, the material of an ordinary meal, the sustenance of this mortal life. (c) The mental attitude of the

recipients. They *remember*, recalling what their Lord did for them, how He went to the Cross, and there offered the sacrifice in and through which the redeeming love of God is victorious over sin and the grave. They *give thanks*. The exercise of the communicant is, at the Table, wholly outward, directed toward the Lord, who loved him, and gave Himself for him. Such love constrains and evokes answering love, and floods the soul with praise. They *receive* the emblems, and in the same act they receive *Christ*, who died for them, and now lives to be their life. In that spiritual oneness, nothing of Christ is withheld from them, not His body—His full personal being; not His blood—His life given as a ransom, blood of the New Covenant. (d) The Benefit. All His benefits are summed up in Himself. In the Lord's Supper we do, in uttermost fact and value, receive Jesus Christ to be the Indweller of our hearts by faith. From such a supreme gift, all other benefits flow—comfort for the heavy-laden, nourishment for the fainting, renewed vigor for those who are lagging in their upward growth. (e) The Recipients. The Church may not treat the Table as the perquisite of a class. At the same time, it must clearly indicate the terms of communion, and, so far as it is humanly possible, see that they are observed. The terms are faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and obedience to His law. Everyone who approaches the Table must make definite profession that he does trust Christ as Saviour, and does acknowledge Him as Master and Lord.

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Whether the "profession" is sincere, is known only to the Searcher of hearts. The Church is bound to see that it is "credible," that is, that it does on the whole correspond with the applicant's known manner of behavior, and that it is not contradicted by his character and conduct. The duty of making this as sure as possible is committed in The United Church to the Pastor, and to those associated with him in the spiritual charge of the congregation. It is a sacred duty, whose neglect is grievous sin, and is fraught with danger to many souls.

CHAPTER XVIII

ARTICLE XVII.—*Of the Ministry.*—We believe that Jesus Christ, as the Supreme Head of the Church, has appointed therein a ministry of the word and sacraments, and calls men to this ministry; that the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognizes and chooses those whom He calls, and should thereupon duly ordain them to the work of the ministry.

In the beginning, the Church of Christ was the creation of the Word of God. In all her history, she has existed to proclaim that Word, and has herself been led and nourished by it. Her highest office, accordingly, is the ministry of the Word, and of the Sacraments, which are the seals of that Word. This is of Divine Appointment, and none dare assume it, who have not been summoned to exercise it by the call of the Church's Head and Lord; and none dare refuse it in whose hearts and consciences the Divine imperative is sounding. The Church, for her part, receives these men as gifts from on high, gives them the place in her order which is their due, and, by solemn action, presents them to God for that special enduement of the Spirit, which alone can enable them to fulfil their sacred responsibilities. The United Church has an ordained ministry, whose orders are "valid" because they have been conferred by the Holy Spirit, and "regular" because the Church's action has been under the guidance of the same Divine Power, and "catholic" because they are scriptural, and human invention has had no part in their institution.

CHAPTER XIX

ARTICLE XVIII.—*Of Church Order and Fellowship.*—We believe that the Supreme and only Head of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ; that its worship, teaching, discipline and government should be administered according to His will by persons chosen for their fitness and duly set apart to their office; and that although the visible Church may contain unworthy members and is liable to err, yet believers ought not lightly to separate themselves from its communion, but are to live in fellowship with their brethren, which fellowship is to be extended, as God gives opportunity, to all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

This article briefly states matters of grave importance, which have a long history behind them, and require on the minister's part careful thought and diligent study.

1. The Headship of Christ. It would seem that the Spirit of God had moved the Church of Scotland to bear witness to this doctrine throughout all the stages of her history, and often at great cost. Before, Popes and Kings and Courts, she has protested that the true Church has no Head but Christ, and is bound to obey Him, and Him only, as He guides His people by His Word and Spirit. Here in Canada, where no assault is made on our liberties, we ought to remember with gratitude those who, both in Scotland and in England, won them for us, and, above all, we ought to serve ourselves heirs of that great past by our loyalty, under changed conditions, to our only King and Lord.

2. The Administration of the affairs of the

Church. The visible Church, as an organized body, must see to it that its various functions are fulfilled in an orderly and harmonious manner, with the utmost possible wisdom and efficiency. Such Churchly activities as worship, teaching, discipline, and government, require intellectual and spiritual qualities of the very highest order on the part of those chosen to lead in their discharge. These men will be the Ministers of the Word, and others who may be associated with them in these functions.

(Note: the article does not go into detail here. The Scottish practice included "deacons," to manage the temporal affairs of the Church, and these were "set apart" for their work. The United Church reserves its freedom to adjust its practice to its needs, its opportunities, and its resources.)

3. The Sin of Schism. The Reformers strongly maintained that they were forced to break with the Church of Rome, because of its unscriptural character. They recognized any "particular Church," which had the notes of (a) the preaching of the Word, (b) the due administration of the Sacraments, (c) the edification of the members in the Christian life, to be a true part of the Visible Catholic Church, and they regarded separation from such a Church as grievous sin. The article takes the same ground; and the best commentary upon it is to be found in the words of Calvin, quoted by Dr. Lindsay, "When we affirm the pure ministry of the Word and our order in the celebration of the Sacraments to be a sufficient pledge and earnest that we may

safely embrace the society in which both these are found as a true Church, we carry the observation to this point, that such a society should never be rejected as long as it continues in these things, although it may be chargeable in other respects with many errors." The point of this "observation" lies in the application thereof!

4. Church Extension. The Church's primary duty is to preach the Gospel to every creature. This duty, however, cannot be adequately fulfilled by mere itineracy. The Church, as the fellowship of the Spirit, must be planted in all new territory, and its doors open to all by whom Jesus is acknowledged as Saviour and Lord.

CHAPTER XX

ARTICLE XIX.—*Of the Resurrection, the Last Judgment and the Future Life.*—We believe that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, through the power of the Son of God, who shall come to judge the living and the dead; that the finally impenitent shall go away into eternal punishment and the righteous into life eternal.

Of the solemn subjects named in the title to this article, there has been much discussion; and a vast literature has grown up dealing with the exegetical and theological problems involved. The Creeds of the Church, both ancient, and reformation or post reformation have, on the whole, observed a wise restraint in speaking of these awful themes. The article merely names the position taken by theologians of the Reformation period, who were moved chiefly by their opposition to the Roman doctrine of purgatory, with all that it involves. Putting the matter more broadly, we may ask—what has a Christian, who in Christ is forgiven and is a child of God, to look forward to, as he draws near the close of his earthly pilgrimage, and lifts his thoughts beyond the grave?

1. The experience of dying. Faith does not ignore the physical and spiritual conditions, which render the prospect solemn beyond words. But the believer, while subdued and humbled, need not be terrified, as though he were to be alone amid

unimagined terrors. He walks through a valley of death-shade; but One is with him, who passed that way before, and made death not a fate, but an opportunity and a transition from less to greater appropriation of our inheritance.

2. Resurrection. The Christian doctrine is not the Greek speculation as to the immortality of the Soul. It keeps close to the conception of full personal life, which it inherited from the religion of Israel. Not a place among bodiless shades, but the consummation of human nature, with perfected powers under perfect conditions, is the Christian's anticipation of the new life that awaits him. We cannot be wrong to include in this expectation the thought of the fellowship, which death will not scatter nor dissolve, but restores to us in depth and tenderness and comprehension beyond all things.

3. Judgment. It is true that for him who is in Christ, there is therefore no condemnation, and at the judgment there will be no reversal of the believer's acceptance. But enough remains of sin and shortcoming to make his appearance before the judgment seat of Christ, a thought to shake his soul to its depths, and to send him to his knees in humble surrender, and to send him forth to greater carefulness and a more complete consecration. This judgment, when and amid what scenery it will take place, is not for us to imagine or dogmatize about. But one condition we are sure of, namely, the coming of Christ. He died under the ban of human

judgment. Now the position is reversed. He is judging all men everywhere. His presence as the living Lord is a continual judgment of men's sin. But time is not forever. Its dispensation culminates, and closes, when the once crucified, but now crowned, Lord, shall be manifested, and the living and the dead have their destiny decreed for the age that is to be.

4. Life eternal. It is not possible to refrain from dwelling on the blessedness of heaven, its sight of Christ, the likeness to him which that sight brings with it, the joys and employments of those who belong to the great multitude that no man can number. But reserve is best. They are alive with fulness of life, a life that can never end. Richard Baxter's words close the matter—

“My knowledge of that life is small
The eye of faith is dim
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all
And I shall be with Him.”

There is one sad and awestricken reflection which arises in our minds. If these are the experiences to which a Christian may look forward with mingled fear and hope, what is to be said of the soul, to whom an adequate presentation of the Gospel has been made, who has been confronted by the Christ in all His saving power, on whose heart the influence of the Holy Spirit has been exerted, persuading and enabling him to believe, if he would, who, spite of all

this, has refused the Gospel offer, has definitely refused to yield himself to his Redeemer, and has hardened himself against the power and love of God in the Spirit? On this awful subject, whatever we are bound to say must be said with utmost awe-stricken reserve. This does not mean, however, that there is no difference, as respects the future, between those who are "in Christ" and those who are separate from Him, or that the preacher ought not to make that difference the theme of earnest appeal and solemn warning. All that awaits those who have received Christ, awaits those who have rejected Him—with *Christ missed out*. (a) A Christless death, (b) a resurrection, that has no Christ to greet the newcomer on the other shore, (c) a Judgment, without the all-availing name of Christ as plea and ground. (d) And, beyond the judgment, not life but death. This is not "eternal punishment" after the analogy of a criminal court. It is simply the rejection of Christ, working out its issues. Are there to be, in the hereafter, souls, who, while it was possible to receive Christ, have definitely refused Him? God alone knows. If there are, what will become of them? Will the issues of unbelief indeed stretch through eternity? It is not for us to pronounce. The words of Dr. Orr, a noted "fundamentalist," are wise and weighty, "God is judge. Enough for us, while seeing to it that we do not fail to enter into the rest of God through unbelief, to be assured, that whatever love

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can do and righteousness permits, with the infinite grace that streams from Crist's Cross behind, will not be left undone." So humble and believing an attitude of mind is better than any pitiless dogma, any unwarranted theory of universalism, or any precarious speculation, regarding "second probation" or "conditional immortality."

CHAPTER XXI

ARTICLE XX.—*Of Christian Service and the Final Triumph.*—We believe that it is our duty as disciples and servants of Christ, to further the extension of His kingdom, to do good unto all men, to maintain the public and private worship of God, to hallow the Lord's Day, to preserve the inviolability of marriage and the sanctity of the family, to uphold the just authority of the State, and so to live in all honesty, purity and charity that our lives shall testify of Christ. We joyfully receive the word of Christ, bidding His people go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, declaring unto them that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and that He will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. We confidently believe that by His power and grace all His enemies shall finally be overcome, and the kingdoms of this world be made the kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

This article, which is at once conclusion and climax, deals with Christian Service and the Christian Hope, respectively. Its exposition will be a fitting close to a series of sermons on the teaching of The United Church on the Christian verities. The preacher needs no help in matters so plain, for the explication of which his own reading and thought will be amply sufficient. The points he has to bring before his people are as follows: (1) Christian Service. Faith and Service go together. Faith without works is dead, and works are the fruit and evidence of faith. The article views the Christian, *first of all* in the community, to which he belongs, and the State of which he is a citizen. It names the outstanding duties, which,

in these capacities, devolve upon him and the institutions, whose ethical value makes them of paramount importance and permanent obligation. It *further* repeats what is stated in previous articles that the Christian church has a universal commission, to extend to all peoples the knowledge of God's redeeming love in Christ. By such service at home and abroad, the kingdom of God is advanced, and His sovereignty established over the nations. (2) The Christian Hope. Such service, however, while indispensable and instrumental and our bounden duty, is not, of itself, the energy by which the Kingdom comes. The Kingdom of God cannot be contrived by organization or engineering. The Prayer, the Lord himself puts on our lips is: "Thy Kingdom come:" and the power, by which it comes, is that of the transcendent and immanent God. Thus, while we serve, we wait upon God for His grace, and we wait for God, that, in the fulness of time, He may vindicate His name, and accomplish the purpose of His love, and bring the whole world beneath the Sovereignty, once for all made victorious in Christ, crucified and risen.

CHAPTER XXII

A QUESTIONNAIRE

For use in Senior Classes and Study Groups

GENERAL

1. Why is our Church described as United?
2. What is the policy of our Church with respect to all Protestant and Evangelical Communion in Canada?

DOCTRINE

1. What is the foundation upon which the Church of Christ is built?
2. What is meant by calling Jesus Christ the "Chief Corner Stone" of His Church?
3. What is the standard by which we may test what is true in doctrine, and required in character and conduct?
4. Name the great Creeds of the Christian Church.
5. State the great Christian verities which are set forth and emphasized in each of these Creeds respectively.
6. State and explain the following evangelical doctrines of the Reformation, as held in common by the three uniting Churches before Union and now maintained by The United Church:
 - (a) The nature of Faith.
 - (b) The experience of Justification.
 - (c) The nature and authority of the Word of God.

ARTICLE I.—OF GOD

1. What moral qualities are, in this Article, attributed to God? Consider the special significance of each.

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2. Show how Christian experience leads believers to confess their faith in the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

ARTICLE II.—OF REVELATION

1. By what means has God made Himself known to men?
2. What does Faith find in the Holy Scriptures?
3. How is the Christian Life enriched by them?

ARTICLE III.—OF THE DIVINE PURPOSE

1. Does the redeeming purpose of God cover all the events in the history of the race, and in the life of the individual?
2. Does this conception of the sovereignty of God destroy the freedom of man, or make God the author of sin? Discuss this.
3. How are Creation, Providence and Redemption related to the fulfilment of God's sovereign design, and the manifestation of His Glory?

ARTICLE IV.—OF CREATION AND PROVIDENCE

1. How is the supremacy of God manifested in the universe?
2. In what relation does God stand to the works of His hand?
3. What are the spiritual and moral capacities, the possession of which distinguishes man from the other creatures of God on the earth?

ARTICLE V.—OF THE SIN OF MAN

1. What is its nature?
2. What is its origin?
3. What is its penalty?
4. What is the condition into which sin has brought the human race and all individual members of it?

ARTICLE VI.—OF THE GRACE OF GOD

1. What is the gift of God's love for the world?
2. State what is offered in the Gospel, on what terms, and to whom.
3. To what great ends do the recipients of the Gospel stand committed according to the saving purpose of God?

ARTICLE VII.—OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

1. What is the position which the Lord Jesus Christ occupies in relation to God and to man?
2. How is His Person constituted in order that He may be able to fulfil His mediatorial work?
3. What two great needs of ignorant and sinful men does He meet in His Person and work?
4. In reference to the second of these, note the terms "Sacrifice," "Satisfaction," "Propitiation" and consider carefully their precise significance.
5. How is His Redemptive work completed by His Resurrection and Ascension?
6. What relation does the Risen Lord sustain towards believers? and what work does He discharge on their behalf?
7. In what sense do we ascribe to our Risen Lord the offices of prophet, priest and king?

ARTICLE VIII.—OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. What work does the Holy Spirit perform on behalf of mankind generally?
2. How does the Holy Spirit operate in the hearts of men, in order to their full appropriation of the Divine Salvation?
3. Note certain of the signs of the indwelling of the Spirit in the Church and in every believer.

ARTICLE IX.—OF REGENERATION

1. Explain
 - (a) Its necessity.
 - (b) Its origin and cause.
 - (c) Its ordinary means.

ARTICLE X.—OF FAITH AND REPENTANCE

1. What is Faith?
2. What is Repentance?

ARTICLE XI.—OF JUSTIFICATION AND SONSHIP

1. What is Justification? Note carefully
 - (a) Its nature.
 - (b) Its ground.
 - (c) The condition under which it becomes ours.
2. How do the sons of men enter upon the standing of sons of God?
3. Suggest some of the privileges of this sonship.

ARTICLE XII.—OF SANCTIFICATION

1. How do regenerate and forgiven men grow in the likeness of Christ?
2. What is the relation between holiness of life, and saving faith?
3. What is the ground of a believer's hope of continuance in the Christian life?

ARTICLE XIII.—OF PRAYER

1. What is our confidence as we approach God in prayer?
2. What are the proper parts of prayer?
3. Does God answer every prayer offered to Him in faith?
Are there any cases of unanswered prayer? Discuss this.

ARTICLE XIV.—OF THE LAW OF GOD

1. How is the moral law related to faith in Christ, and to the blessed experiences which flow from faith?

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2. Note certain Scriptural summaries of the law of God.
3. What issues in the history of mankind are to be expected from the fulfilment of the will of God?

ARTICLE XV.—OF THE CHURCH

1. What is meant in Scriptures by “the body of Christ”?
2. Who are the members of this body, and how are they related to their Head, and to one another?
3. Of whom does the Church of Christ visible on earth consist?
4. What purpose is the Church visible intended to serve?
5. Explain the phrase used in the Article: “Every particular Church throughout the world.”
6. What are the notes, whereby a “particular Church” is known to be a genuine part of the universal Christian brotherhood?

ARTICLE XVI.—OF THE SACRAMENTS

1. What purposes do the two Sacraments instituted by Christ serve in the experience of the Christian fellowship, and of individual believers?
2. Why is the threefold name of God employed in administering the Sacrament of Baptism?
3. What is the special value of Baptism in the experience of believers?
4. Why does The United Church continue the practice of infant baptism?
5. What ought to follow upon infant baptism in the home and in the Church?
6. What is the special value of the Lord’s Supper as celebrated within the Christian fellowship?
7. What is the condition to be fulfilled by participants in order that they may receive the blessing of the ordinance?
8. In what sense is the body and blood of Christ received in the ordinance?

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9. In guarding the sanctity of the Lord's Table, what moral and spiritual qualities should the Church expect and require of candidates for admission to full Communion?

ARTICLE XVII.—OF THE MINISTRY

1. Are "ministers" within the Church indispensable to its life and work?
2. What does ordination confer upon the minister as he enters upon his vocation?

ARTICLE XVIII.—OF CHURCH ORDER AND FELLOWSHIP

1. To whom does the Church owe absolute loyalty as its supreme and only Head?
2. Consider in this connection the relation which ought to exist between the Church and the State?
3. What offices has the Church to discharge, according to the will of its King and Lord?
4. What is the primary duty of members of the Christian fellowship towards one another?
5. What is meant by "schism" in Scripture and in Church History?

ARTICLE XIX.—OF THE RESURRECTION, THE LAST JUDGMENT AND THE FUTURE LIFE

1. What has a believer to expect in the unknown future that awaits him in time and in eternity?

ARTICLE XX.—OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE AND THE FINAL TRIUMPH

1. Name the leading departments of Service which the Church and her members must pursue in loyalty to Christ our King and Lord.
2. How may we expect the final victory of Christ's cause and Kingdom to be effected?

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